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

Eighth session

Astana, 10–12 October 2018

Report of the Meeting of the Parties on its eighth session

Addendum

Rules of procedure of the Meetings of the Parties, Strategy for the implementation of the Convention at the global level, Programme of work of the International Water Assessment Centre for 2019–2021 and Decisions

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Rules of procedure of the Meetings of the Parties

I. Purpose

Rule 1

These rules of procedure shall apply to the meetings of the Parties convened in accordance with article 17 of the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes.

II. Definitions

Rule 2

For the purposes of these rules:

1. “Convention” means the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes, adopted at Helsinki, Finland, on 17 March 1992.
2. “Parties” means Contracting Parties to the Convention.
3. “Parties present and voting” means Parties present and casting an affirmative or negative vote. Parties abstaining from voting shall be considered as not voting.
4. “Meeting of the Parties” means the body established by the Parties in accordance with article 17 of the Convention.
5. “A meeting of the Parties” means an ordinary or extraordinary meeting convened in accordance with article 17 of the Convention.
6. “Regional economic integration organization” means an organization in accordance with article 23 of the Convention.
7. “Chair” means the Chair elected in accordance with rule 17 of these rules of procedure.
8. “Secretariat” means, in accordance with article 19 of the Convention, the Executive Secretary of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe.

III. Place of meetings

Rule 3

The meetings of the Parties shall be held at the United Nations Office at Geneva unless other appropriate arrangements are made by the Parties and/or the Bureau in consultation with the secretariat.

IV. Dates of meetings

Rule 4

The Meeting of the Parties shall set the indicative date for the opening and the duration of its next ordinary meeting. Ordinary meetings shall be held at least every three years.

In the case of an extraordinary meeting convened at the written request of a Party pursuant to article 17, paragraph 1, of the Convention or at the written request of the Bureau, it shall be convened not later than 90 days after the date on which the request is supported by at least one third of the Parties.

V. Notification

Rule 5

1. The secretariat shall notify all Parties of the date and venue of a meeting of the Parties at least six weeks before it is due to take place.

2. The secretariat shall also provide notification of the date and venue of a meeting of the Parties, at least six weeks before it is due to take place, to:

(a) Those Member States of the United Nations and regional economic integration organizations which are entitled to become a Party to the Convention but have not yet done so;

(b) Organizations of the United Nations system with specific competence on issues of the Convention;

(c) Other relevant intergovernmental organizations, qualified or having an interest in the fields to which the Convention relates that have requested to be so notified;

(d) Relevant non-governmental organizations, qualified or having an interest in the fields to which the Convention relates, that have requested to be so notified.

3. Unless a Party or an observer requests a different method of communication, notification by electronic mail shall be considered sufficient for the purposes of this rule.

VI. Observers

Rule 6

1. Representatives of the States and the organizations identified in rule 5, paragraph 2, shall be entitled to participate in the proceedings of any meeting governed by these rules.

2. Representatives of any of the organizations referred to in rule 5, paragraph 2 (d), shall be entitled to participate in the proceedings of any meeting governed by these rules, unless one third of the Parties present at that meeting objects to the participation of representatives of that organization.

3. Observers entitled to participate in the proceedings of meetings pursuant to this rule do not have the right to vote at such meetings.

VII. Agenda

Rule 7

In consultation with the Bureau, the secretariat shall prepare the provisional agenda of each meeting of the Parties.

Rule 8

1. The provisional agenda for a meeting of the Parties shall include, where appropriate:
 - (a) Items specified in article 17, paragraph 2, of the Convention;
 - (b) Items arising from previous meetings of the Parties;
 - (c) Any item proposed by the Bureau and/or the secretariat;
 - (d) Any item proposed by a Party before the agenda is circulated.
2. The first item on the provisional agenda for each meeting shall be the adoption of the agenda.

Rule 9

The provisional agenda for a meeting of the Parties, together with available supporting documents, shall be distributed by the secretariat to the Parties at least six weeks before the opening of the meeting. In this regard, the provisions of rule 5, paragraph 3, shall apply.

Rule 10

The secretariat shall, in consultation with the Chair, include any question suitable for the agenda which may arise between the dispatch of the provisional agenda and the opening of the meeting of the Parties in an addendum to the provisional agenda, which the Meeting of the Parties shall examine together with the provisional agenda.

Rule 11

The Meeting of the Parties, when adopting the agenda of its meeting, may add, delete, defer or amend items. The Meeting of the Parties may amend the agenda at any time.

VIII. Representation and credentials

Rule 12

Each Party participating in the meetings of the Parties shall be represented by a delegation consisting of a head of delegation and such other representatives, alternate representatives and advisers as it thinks appropriate.

Rule 13

An alternate representative or an adviser may act as a representative upon designation by the head of delegation.

Rule 14

The credentials of all representatives and names of alternate representatives and advisers shall be submitted to the secretariat at the opening of any meeting of the Parties. Any later change in the composition of the delegation shall also be submitted to the secretariat.

Rule 15

The officers of the Meeting of the Parties shall examine the credentials and submit their report to the Meeting of the Parties.

Rule 16

Pending a decision of the Meeting of the Parties upon their credentials, representatives shall be entitled to participate in the meeting.

IX. Officers**Rule 17**

1. If a meeting is hosted by a Party, a representative of the host country may nominate a person to chair the meeting whether or not he/she has been previously elected as a member of the Bureau.
2. At the end of each meeting, the Meeting of the Parties shall elect a Chair and two Vice-Chairs from among the representatives of the Parties. The Meeting of the Parties shall elect additional officers, as it deems necessary for the performance of its functions, taking into account rule 20, paragraph 1.
3. The Chairperson, the Vice-Chairpersons and the other elected officers shall serve as the officers of the Meeting of the Parties and remain in office until their successors are elected. They shall be eligible for re-election. The Meeting of the Parties may assign specific tasks to the officers to be carried out before its next meeting. In electing the officers, due account shall be taken of the need to ensure a balanced geographic representation of the Parties. If the Chair, one of the Vice-Chairs or one of the other elected officers is permanently unable to serve as officer, the remaining members of the Bureau shall co-opt a successor by consensus. The Bureau should take into account the proposal for a successor by the Party represented by the outgoing Chair, Vice-Chair or other elected officer.
4. The Chair shall participate in the meeting of the Parties in that capacity and shall not at the same time exercise the rights of a representative of a Party. In such a case, the Party concerned shall designate another representative who shall be entitled to represent it in the Meeting of the Parties and to exercise its right to vote.

Rule 18

1. In addition to exercising the powers conferred upon him/her elsewhere by these rules, the Chair shall:
 - (a) Declare the opening and closing of the meeting of the Parties;
 - (b) Preside at the sessions of the meeting;
 - (c) Ensure the observance of these rules;
 - (d) Accord the right to speak;
 - (e) Put questions to the vote and announce decisions;
 - (f) Rule on points of order;
 - (g) Subject to these rules, exercise control over the proceedings and maintain order.
2. The Chair may, moreover, propose:
 - (a) The closure of the list of speakers;
 - (b) A limitation on the time allowed to speakers and on the number of times each representative may speak on a question;
 - (c) The adjournment or closure of the debate;
 - (d) The suspension or adjournment of the meeting of the Parties.
3. The Chair, in the exercise of his/her functions, remains under the authority of the Meeting of the Parties.

Rule 19

1. If the Chair is temporarily absent, or asks to be temporarily replaced, a Vice-Chair shall act as Chair.
2. At any time, the Chair may ask one of the Vice-Chairs or the person nominated by the host country, in accordance with rule 17, to chair the meeting.

X. Bureau

Rule 20

1. The Bureau of the Meeting of the Parties shall be composed of not fewer than eight persons including the Chair and the two Vice-Chairs of the Meeting of the Parties, the Chairs of the working groups established according to rule 21 and, if applicable, the other officers elected according to rule 17, paragraph 2.
2. The Chair of the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol on Water and Health shall be invited to participate in the Bureau of the Meeting of the Parties to the Convention without the right to vote.
3. The Bureau shall be chaired by the Chair or the acting Chair of the Meeting of the Parties.
4. The Bureau, with the assistance of the secretariat, shall:

(a) Make arrangements to further develop the workplan, adapt it to changing circumstances and avoid, to the extent possible, duplication of efforts with water-related activities of other United Nations bodies and other international organizations;

(b) Take initiatives to strengthen the application of the Convention; maintain liaison with the Bureau of the Meetings of the Parties to the Protocol on Water and Health, the bureaux of governing bodies of other environmental conventions, the Bureau of the ECE Committee on Environmental Policy, international organizations, financial institutions, environmental policymaking bodies and non-governmental organizations to improve the implementation of the Convention; and take other appropriate measures to facilitate the implementation of the workplan;

(c) Carry out other tasks entrusted to it by the Meeting of the Parties.

5. Subject to rule 21, paragraph 1, the Bureau may decide on the convening of meetings of working groups and other bodies which have been established or need to be established to implement the programme of work.

XI. Bodies to implement the workplan

Rule 21

1. The Meeting of the Parties may establish such working groups and other bodies such as task forces and expert groups, as it deems necessary for the performance of its functions and the implementation of the workplan, and may request them to help organize workshops, seminars, training courses and other meetings under the Convention. Unless otherwise decided by the Meeting of the Parties, the working groups and other bodies shall elect their own officers and decide on the dates and frequency of their meetings.

2. The Meeting of the Parties shall determine the matters to be considered by the working groups and other bodies, their term and their working languages. The Meeting of the Parties may at any time terminate the function of the working groups and other bodies.

3. To promote harmonious cooperation, the Meeting of the Parties to the Convention shall make arrangements with the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol on Water and Health regarding the terms of reference of working groups and other bodies established under the Convention and the Protocol.

4. Unless otherwise decided by the Meeting of the Parties, these rules of procedure shall apply, *mutatis mutandis*, to the proceedings of working groups and other bodies established by the Meeting of the Parties under the present rule, save as otherwise specified in this rule.

5. Any official supporting document for a meeting of a working group or other body shall be distributed at least one month before the opening of the meeting.

6. A majority of the Parties designated by the Meeting of the Parties to take part in the body shall constitute a quorum, but in the case of open-ended bodies, one quarter of the Parties shall constitute a quorum.

7. The chair of a working group or other body may exercise the right to vote.

8. Rules 4, 12 to 17 and 20 shall not apply to the proceedings of working groups and other bodies.

9. Attendance by members of the public and participation without the right to vote by, *inter alia*, Parties and observers in meetings of bodies of limited membership shall be decided by the Meeting of the Parties or the body concerned.

XII. Secretariat

Rule 22

The Executive Secretary of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe shall provide secretariat services for the Meeting of the Parties and all meetings organized under the auspices of the Meeting of the Parties. He/she may delegate these functions to a member of his/her staff.

Rule 23

For meetings of the Parties, the secretariat shall:

- (a) Prepare the documentation, in consultation with the Bureau;
- (b) Arrange for interpretation;
- (c) Arrange for the translation, reproduction and distribution of the documents;
- (d) Arrange for the custody and preservation of the documents in the archives of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe.

XIII. Conduct of business

Rule 24

1. The meetings of the Parties shall ordinarily be held in public. The Meeting of the Parties may decide that a meeting or parts of it shall be held in private.
2. Where it is not feasible to accommodate in the meeting room all the members of the public who have requested to attend the meeting, the proceedings of the meeting shall be relayed to those members of the public using audiovisual equipment wherever appropriate.
3. The secretariat and, if the meeting is held in a location other than the United Nations Office at Geneva, the host government or organization shall ensure that practical arrangements are made to facilitate the entitlements of members of the public under this rule.

Rule 25

The Chair may declare a meeting of the Parties open and permit debate to proceed when representatives of the majority of the Parties are present.

Rule 26

1. The Chair shall determine the list and order of speakers at a meeting of the Parties. Without prejudice to rules 27, 28, 29 and 31, the Chair shall call upon speakers in the order in which they indicate their wish to speak. The secretariat shall be in charge of drawing up a list of such speakers. The Chair may call a speaker to order if his/her remarks are not relevant to the subject under discussion.
2. The Meeting of the Parties may, on a proposal from the Chair or from any Party, limit the time allowed to each speaker and the number of times each representative may speak on a question. Before a decision is taken, two representatives may speak in favour of and two

against a proposal to set such limits. When the debate is limited and a speaker exceeds the allotted time, the Chair shall call him/her to order without delay.

3. The Executive Secretary or his/her representative may at any meeting make either oral or written statements concerning any question under consideration.

Rule 27

An officer of a body established by the Meeting of the Parties may be accorded precedence by the Chair of the Meeting of the Parties for the purpose of explaining the conclusions arrived at by this body.

Rule 28

During the discussion of any matter, a representative may at any time raise a point of order, which shall be decided immediately by the Chair in accordance with these rules. A representative may appeal against the ruling of the Chair. The appeal shall immediately be put to the vote and the ruling shall stand unless overruled by a majority of the Parties present and voting. A representative may not, in raising a point of order, speak on the substance of the matter under discussion.

Rule 29

Any motion calling for a decision on the competence of the Meeting of the Parties to discuss any matter or to adopt a proposal or an amendment to a proposal submitted to it shall be put to the vote before the matter is discussed or a vote is taken on the proposal or amendment in question.

Rule 30

1. Without prejudice to paragraph 2 of this rule, proposals and amendments to proposals shall normally be presented in writing and handed to the secretariat, which shall circulate copies to the Parties. As a general rule, no proposal shall be discussed or put to the vote at any meeting unless copies of it have been circulated to delegations not later than 24 hours in advance. The Chair may, however, permit the discussion and consideration of amendments to proposals or of procedural motions even though those amendments or motions have not been circulated or have been circulated only the same day.

2. Proposals for amending the Convention, including its annexes, shall be submitted to the secretariat at least 120 days before the meeting of the Parties at which they are proposed for adoption by consensus, so that the secretariat, in accordance with article 21, paragraph 3, of the Convention, can communicate these proposals to the Parties at least 90 days before the meeting of the Parties.

Rule 31

1. Subject to rule 28, the following motions shall have precedence, in the order indicated below, over all other proposals or motions:

- (a) To suspend the meeting of the Parties;
- (b) To adjourn the meeting of the Parties;

- (c) To adjourn debate on a question under discussion;
 - (d) For closure of the debate on a question under discussion.
2. Permission to speak on a motion falling within (a) to (d) above shall be granted only to the proposer and, in addition, to one speaker in favour of and two against the motion, after which it shall immediately be put to the vote.

Rule 32

A proposal or motion may be withdrawn by its proposer at any time before voting on it has begun, provided that the motion has not been amended. A proposal or motion that is withdrawn may be reintroduced by any other Party.

Rule 33

When a proposal has been adopted or rejected, it may not be reconsidered at the same meeting unless the Meeting of the Parties, by a three-fourths majority of the Parties present and voting, decides in favour of reconsideration. Permission to speak on a motion to reconsider shall be accorded only to the mover and one other supporter, after which it shall immediately be put to the vote.

XIV. Voting

Rule 34

1. The Meeting of the Parties shall make every effort to reach its decisions by consensus, that is the absence of any formal objection by a Party. If all efforts at consensus have been exhausted, and no agreement reached, the decisions — except for amendments to the Convention and its annexes (article 21 of the Convention), to rule 33, to rule 47 and to paragraph 2 of this rule — shall be taken by a majority of the Parties present and voting.
2. Decisions of the Meeting of the Parties on financial matters shall be adopted by consensus of the Parties present.

Rule 35

If two or more proposals relate to the same question, the Meeting of the Parties, unless it decides otherwise, shall vote on the proposals in the order in which they have been submitted. The Meeting of the Parties may, after each vote on a proposal, decide whether or not to vote on the next proposal.

Rule 36

Any representative may request that any part of a proposal or of an amendment to a proposal be voted on separately. If objection is made to the request for division, the Chair shall permit two representatives to speak, one in favour of and the other against the motion, after which it shall immediately be put to the vote.

Rule 37

If the motion referred to in rule 36 is adopted, those parts of a proposal or of an amendment to a proposal which have been approved shall then be put to the vote as a whole. If all the operative parts of a proposal or amendment have been rejected, the proposal or amendment shall be considered to have been rejected as a whole.

Rule 38

A motion is considered to be an amendment to a proposal if it merely adds to, deletes from, or revises that proposal. An amendment shall be voted on before the proposal to which it relates is put to the vote and, if the amendment is adopted, the amended proposal shall then be voted on.

Rule 39

If two or more amendments to a proposal are moved, the Meeting of the Parties shall first vote on the amendment furthest removed in substance from the original proposal, then on the amendment next furthest removed there from, and so on, until all amendments have been put to the vote.

Rule 40

Except for elections, voting shall normally be by show of hands. A roll call shall be taken if one is requested by any Party. It shall be taken in the English alphabetical order of the names of the Parties participating in the meeting of the Parties beginning with the Party whose name is drawn by lots by the Chair. However, if at any time a Party requests a secret ballot, that shall be the method of voting on the issue in question.

Rule 41

The voting of each Party participating in a vote by roll call shall be recorded in the report of the meeting.

Rule 42

After the Chair has announced the beginning of voting, no representative shall interrupt the voting except on a point of order in connection with the actual conduct of voting. The Chair may permit the Parties to explain their votes, either before or after the voting, and may limit the time allowed for such explanations. He/she shall not permit the proposer of a proposal or an amendment to a proposal to explain his/her vote on his/her own proposal or amendment, unless it has been amended.

Rule 43

All elections shall be decided by secret ballot, unless, in the absence of any objection, the Meeting of the Parties decides to proceed without taking a ballot on an agreed candidate or slate.

XV. Official languages

Rule 44

The official languages of the Meeting of the Parties shall be English, French and Russian. Pending availability of resources, interpretation and translation of documents shall be provided in Arabic, Chinese and Spanish, as appropriate.

Rule 45

1. Statements made during meetings of the Parties in an official language shall be interpreted into the other official languages.
2. A representative may speak in a language other than an official language if he/she provides for interpretation into one of the official languages.

Rule 46

Official documents of the Meeting of the Parties shall be drawn up in one of the official languages and translated into the other official languages.

XVI. Amendments to the rules of procedure

Rule 47

Amendments to these rules of procedure shall be adopted by the Meeting of the Parties by consensus.

XVII. Overriding authority of the convention

Rule 48

In the event of conflict between any provision of these rules and any provision of the Convention, the provision of the Convention shall prevail.

Strategy for the implementation of the Convention at the global level

I. Vision and strategic objectives by 2030

A. Vision

1. The Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes (Water Convention) has a vision for 2030 that:

Transboundary waters worldwide are managed in cooperation between riparian countries in order to promote sustainable development, peace and security.

B. Strategic objectives

2. There are five strategic objectives for the Convention by 2030:

(a) *Objective 1*: Increased awareness of and political support for the Convention and transboundary water cooperation;

(b) *Objective 2*: Increased accession to the Convention;

(c) *Objective 3*: Increased support for implementation of the Convention and for transboundary water management;

(d) *Objective 4*: Increased support for implementation of the water-related Sustainable Development Goals, in particular target 6.5, through the Convention;

(e) *Objective 5*: Increased partnerships and synergies with other actors.

II. Background and purpose of the strategy

3. The Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes (Water Convention) was originally negotiated as a regional instrument for the pan-European region. Amendments to Articles 25 and 26 of the Convention, adopted in 2003, allowed all United Nations Member States to accede to the Convention as from 1 March 2016.

4. The global implementation of the Convention is a clear priority for its Parties. At the same time, the extensive participation in its activities by countries outside the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) region, Chad's accession to the Convention on 23 May 2018 and the many other countries that have already started national accession processes demonstrate that the global opening of the Convention is of high importance for countries outside the region. This strategy, in its process of implementation of the Water Convention, gives due attention to the Convention on the Law of the Non-navigational Uses of International Watercourses (Watercourses Convention) in view of the coherence between and the complementarity of the two conventions.

5. This document represents the first strategy for the implementation of the Water Convention at the global level. In order to realize the benefits of the opening of the Convention, the strategy establishes the basis for the evolution of the Convention in the future. Building on past success factors to date, the strategy defines objectives, means and approaches in order to ensure that the globalization process proceeds rapidly and that the Convention's framework, work modality and mechanisms are fit for promoting global

implementation and able to respond to the related challenges. The strategy seeks to ensure that partners and stakeholders can best contribute to and benefit from this process so that forces are joined, synergies built upon and duplication avoided. The strategy also defines how the Convention will support implementation of the water-related Sustainable Development Goals, and particularly target 6.5 on transboundary water cooperation.

6. The strategy reinforces the vision for the future of the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes (see ECE/MP.WAT/39/Add.2), adopted at the sixth session of the Meeting of the Parties (Rome, 28–30 November 2012).

7. It is complemented by the programme of work under the Convention, adopted every three years by the Meeting of the Parties. The activities set out in the programme of work are intended to provide direct support for transboundary water cooperation and the sustainable management of shared water resources. Activities in the strategy are intended to make the Convention's implementation more effective and fit for purpose and to accelerate its impact at the global level.

III. The Water Convention: its importance and benefits

8. The Water Convention aims to protect and ensure the quantity, quality and sustainable use of transboundary surface waters and groundwater by strengthening transboundary water cooperation. The Convention fosters the implementation of integrated water resources management, particularly through the basin approach.

9. The Convention requires Parties to prevent, control and reduce transboundary impact, use transboundary waters in a reasonable and equitable way and ensure their sustainable management. Parties bordering the same transboundary waters have to cooperate by entering into specific agreements or arrangements and establishing joint bodies.

10. As a framework agreement, the Convention does not replace bilateral and multilateral agreements for specific rivers, lakes and groundwaters and their basins or recharge areas. Instead, it fosters the establishment, implementation and further development of such agreements. It enshrines a balanced approach, based on equality and reciprocity, that offers benefits to and places similar demands on both upstream and downstream countries.

11. Over the past 25 years, the Convention has proven its effectiveness and made a real difference on the ground. It has fostered the development of agreements, the establishment of joint institutions and the strengthening and broadening of cooperation at the political and technical levels. At the same time, the Convention has strengthened national water governance.

12. It is also a powerful tool to promote the achievement of other global commitments, including under other multilateral environmental agreements, and has contributed to achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Its role towards the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals will be even greater, particularly with respect to Goal 6 (Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all) and target 6.5, which calls for transboundary cooperation to implement integrated water resources management. The Convention is complemented by its Protocol on Water and Health which aims at protecting human health and well-being through better water management, including the protection of water ecosystems and the prevention, control and reduction of water-related diseases. With its strong integrated and intersectoral approach, its focus on prevention and on the whole water cycle and its attention to safety and equity aspects, the Protocol's provisions and principles are fully aligned with the Sustainable Development Goal 6 on clean

water and sanitation. It can therefore serve as a tool to operationalize the implementation of the Goal 6 and to foster its achievement in the pan-European region.

13. One of the Convention's strengths is its institutional framework, which provides an intergovernmental platform under United Nations auspices for the continuous and progressive development and advancement of transboundary cooperation, the tracking of progress and the development of policy and technical responses.

14. Its highest decision-making body is the Meeting of the Parties, which is convened every three years. The subsidiary bodies of the Meeting of the Parties include the Bureau, the Working Group on Integrated Water Resource Management, the Working Group on Monitoring and Assessment, the Task Force on Water and Climate, the Task Force on the Water-Food-Energy-Ecosystem Nexus and the Joint Expert Group on Water and Industrial Accidents. The Convention also has an Implementation Committee, which provides a mechanism for facilitating and supporting implementation of and compliance with the Convention; a secretariat; and a collaborative centre, the International Water Assessment Centre (IWAC). This institutional structure is dynamic and Parties adapt it to their needs by creating, suspending or terminating bodies, or by amending the respective terms of reference necessary. Similarly, Parties define thematic priorities for the work under the Convention.

15. Such an institutional framework supports both Parties and non-Parties in the implementation and progressive development of the Convention, including through capacity-building, exchanges of experience and good practices, elaboration of guidelines and recommendations, development of legally binding protocols, and mutual assistance (such as projects on the ground).

IV. Global water issues and challenges for transboundary cooperation and implementation of the Convention

16. Water use is unsustainable in many areas of the world and the water resource situation is projected to become worse in the coming decades owing to increasing pressure from population growth, agriculture, energy production and climate change. The main challenges include:

(a) Pressures due to poor management practices, pollution, overexploitation, unsustainable production and consumption patterns, hydromorphological alterations, inadequate investment in infrastructure and low water use efficiency;

(b) Competition between water-using sectors and poor integration and coherence of sectoral policies;

(c) Climate change impacts on water resources, such as increased intensity and frequency of extreme weather events and impacts on quality and quantity, as well as increased demands from different sectors owing to climate change (e.g., increased irrigation needs and increased hydropower production).

17. Transboundary river and lake basins account for nearly half of the earth's land surface and generate roughly 60 per cent of global freshwater flow. 40 per cent of the world's population live in shared basins and over 600 aquifers are shared. Transboundary water cooperation is therefore increasingly vital to prevent conflicts and ensure effective and sustainable use and management of shared resources. However:

(a) Cooperation in many basins is not adequate to address the aforementioned challenges for a variety of reasons, including weak legal and/or institutional frameworks and insufficient implementation of joint policies and regulations;

(b) Political will to achieve sustainability and transboundary cooperation is often lacking, which in some cases, is due to the misperception that finding cooperative solutions hinders national interests rather than bringing benefits;

(c) Owing to the long-term nature of cooperation, to sustain progress there is a need for long-term interventions which often do not correspond to the capacities and strategies of partners supporting such processes, nor to electoral cycles;

(d) Financial and human resources at the national and transboundary levels are lacking;

(e) Due to a lack of effective coordination mechanisms, there are many instances of duplication of activities by different stakeholders, lack of coordination and missed opportunities to capitalize on synergies. Resources are therefore wasted.

18. There are also a number of challenges linked to global accession to and global implementation of the Water Convention:

(a) While awareness of the Convention outside the ECE region has grown markedly in recent years, there is still a need to further promote such awareness at the technical and political levels;

(b) The entry into force of the Watercourses Convention in 2014 offers a great opportunity to strengthen international water law and promote transboundary water cooperation. The two Conventions are coherent and complementary and are most effective as a package. They should therefore be promoted together. However, the relationship between them generates confusion that needs to be clarified;

(c) There are increasing demands by Parties and non-Parties for support with implementation and compliance, including in the form of field-level assistance projects and capacity-building. These demands significantly exceed the capacity of Parties and the secretariat to respond.

V. Opportunities provided by the global opening of the Convention

19. The global opening of the Water Convention provides a unique opportunity to build a framework that can better respond to the aforementioned challenges. It also provides many opportunities for countries — both Parties and prospective Parties — international organizations, financial institutions and civil society to further transboundary water cooperation.

20. This opportunity is timely: on the one hand, the challenges are growing and responses are urgent; and, on the other hand, the implementation of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda — including the political momentum it has generated and the national and international arrangements which are ongoing to implement it — support government efforts. The global opening of the Convention provides an opportunity for the international community to build a platform in the United Nations system concerning transboundary water cooperation that can best support the efforts of governments and other actors.

A. Opportunities for Parties and prospective Parties

21. Prospective Parties can greatly benefit from acceding and implementing the Convention and from its political and technical framework, which brings together countries, international organizations, financial institutions and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). At the same time, also current Parties take advantage from the global membership

of the Convention as benefits from the Convention are enhanced by further enlarging and developing its framework at the global level. Opportunities for Parties and prospective Parties include the following:

(a) The Convention's implementation strengthens water governance and the application of integrated water resources management, including the conjunctive use of groundwater and surface water, and promotes the integration and reconciliation of sectoral policies at the national and transboundary levels;

(b) Countries and joint bodies benefit from the existing experience under the Convention, e.g. its guidance documents, activities and projects on the ground, learn from each other and exchange good practices, thereby strengthening their capacity to address transboundary water challenges;

(c) The Convention's reporting mechanism helps countries to assess their situation with regard to transboundary water management. It is a useful means to highlight progress achieved and raise attention to existing challenges. It can therefore help strengthen political support for cooperation and attract resources for addressing gaps. National reports are a useful basis for dialogue with other riparian countries, especially when no other framework for cooperation exists. Finally, reports can serve as a means to keep the public informed of progress in the implementation of transboundary water cooperation;

(d) The Convention and its institutional framework support national efforts of countries towards the implementation of the water-related Sustainable Development Goals and, in particular, target 6.5, which calls on the international community to implement integrated water resources management at all levels, including through transboundary cooperation as appropriate, by 2030. Thorough tracking of progress through the Convention's reporting mechanism, the development of political and technical responses and the establishment of partnerships are important assets in this respect;

(e) Through the Convention's framework, countries can receive support and direct assistance from other countries, international organizations and development partners in order to tackle emerging issues and solve their transboundary cooperation problems. In particular, the Convention's framework can provide easier access to financial resources by bringing together bilateral and multilateral donors. Reporting under the Convention may also be a means to approach potential donors;

(f) By requiring Parties to develop basin-level agreements or arrangements and set up joint bodies, the Convention reduces uncertainty in relations between riparian States and helps to prevent potential tensions, disagreements and differences; this, in turn, contributes to the maintenance of international peace. Parties have also developed specific tools, particularly the Implementation Committee, in order to facilitate cooperation and avoid conflicts;

(g) Through the global framework of the Convention, countries can strengthen political attention and increase commitment to transboundary water cooperation. Moreover, Parties can further develop the Convention's regime by negotiating new instruments (both legally binding and non-legally binding) in order to better respond to global transboundary water issues;

(h) The Convention evolves to address emerging needs and can be complemented by additional legal instruments or amendments. For example, the Protocol on Water and Health was developed in order to address health-related issues, particularly access to safe water and sustainable sanitation. While the Protocol is not open for accession by countries from outside the ECE region, its materials, publications, guidelines and good practices can be used worldwide and its reporting mechanism is open to non-Parties;

(i) Implementation of the Convention supports and complements the implementation of other international instruments, in particular the Watercourses Convention, the draft articles on the law of transboundary aquifers and other multilateral environmental agreements, such as the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, the Convention on Biological Diversity, the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification and the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands of International Importance especially as Waterfowl Habitat.

B. Opportunities for international organizations, international financial institutions, bilateral and multilateral development partners, civil society and non-governmental organizations

22. Many actors are actively engaged in supporting transboundary water cooperation processes that are key to progress in this area. By participating in and contributing to the Convention's framework and work, they can increase the efficiency of their actions and better support both countries' efforts to implement the Convention and the strengthening of transboundary water cooperation worldwide. In particular:

(a) The Convention offers a global framework for coordination of activities and interventions, promoting synergies, joining forces, avoiding duplication of initiatives and ensuring continuity of effort;

(b) The Convention offers a global framework for the exchange of knowledge, allowing stakeholders to benefit from existing experience and tools and to upscale the impact of their efforts by promoting them worldwide;

(c) The Convention provides a framework through which countries and partners can demonstrate progress. For instance, the regular reporting under the Convention can provide a useful tool for measuring progress and the impact of interventions;

(d) The Convention provides a unique intergovernmental political framework within which issues can be raised, political attention can be catalysed and stakeholders can engage in dialogue with each other;

(e) The Convention's framework can give international organizations and other stakeholders easier access to financial resources by bringing together bilateral and multilateral donors;

(f) The Convention can increase the sustainability of cooperation projects and reduce investment risks owing to the legally binding long-term commitments made by countries and to its continuous support for cooperation;

(g) The Convention's implementation and the many activities carried out within its framework can strengthen countries' capacity and improve the bankability of projects and the efficiency of their implementation;

(h) The Convention embeds progressive provisions for public information and promotes public participation, thereby strengthening the rights of civil society;

(i) The Convention's intergovernmental framework offers an open and participatory forum for civil society engagement in order to raise the political profile of both global and specific issues.

VI. Strategic objectives

23. The strategy is built around five objectives. To substantiate the strategy, concrete actions are defined, together with the means and actors responsible for their implementation. These actions should be seen as illustrative and non-exhaustive; they add to and further define the traditional promotional and other activities envisaged in the Convention's programme of work. Their implementation will depend essentially on the resources available. Therefore, opportunities that will arise will guide implementation. Most of these actions will support the achievement of more than one objective, as illustrated in the table below.

24. It should be emphasized that the actions contained in the strategy are complemented by concrete activities included in the triennial programmes of work adopted by the Meeting of the Parties. They seek to make the Convention and its mechanisms, tools and partners more efficient in promoting cooperation and sustainable water management at the global level. Where relevant and appropriate, the Water Convention will be promoted together with the Watercourses Convention.

Table¹**Links between actions and the relevant strategic objectives**

	<i>Objective 1: Increased awareness and political support</i>	<i>Objective 2: Increased accession to the Convention</i>	<i>Objective 3: Increased support for implementation of the Convention</i>	<i>Objective 4: Increased support for implementation of water-related SDGs</i>	<i>Objective 5: Increased partnerships and synergies</i>
1.1 High-level and prominent actors	X	X	X	X	
1.2 Increasing awareness among “multipliers”	X	X			X
1.3 Strengthening the role of focal points	X	X	X	X	
1.4 Awareness-raising events	X	X			X
1.5 Promotional/communication materials	X	X	X		X
2.1 Involving Parties in support for accession		X	X		
2.2 Creating a pool of experts		X	X	X	X
2.3 Mutual learning on working towards accession		X	X		X
2.4 Regional approaches to accession		X			X
3.1 Strengthening capacity		X	X	X	X
3.2 Reporting			X	X	X
3.3 Impact of guidance materials	X	X	X		X
3.4 Negotiation of new agreements	X	X	X	X	X
3.5 Exploring new financing models		X	X		X
4.1 Monitoring and review of progress towards target 6.5			X	X	X
4.2 Supporting the achievement of target 6.5			X	X	X
5.1 Regional approach to implementation		X	X		X
5.2 Cooperation with the Global Environment Facility		X	X		
5.3 Cooperation with long- established partners		X	X	X	X
5.4 Reaching out to new partners		X	X	X	X

¹ For enhanced readability, the titles of actions and objectives have been shortened in the table. For the full titles, see the rest of this chapter.

Objective 1

Increased awareness of and political support for the Convention and transboundary water cooperation

1.1 Involving high-level and prominent actors in the promotion of the Convention and of transboundary cooperation

25. Important political figures – such as current and former Presidents or Ministers – and well-known personalities and public figures, also from outside the water sector will be made aware of the Convention and of the importance of transboundary water cooperation so that they can act as “ambassadors” for the Convention, promote it together with the importance of transboundary cooperation and can advocate for further (including financial) support. The Parties will identify these people and brief them using, among other things, materials prepared by the secretariat.

1.2 Increasing awareness among “multipliers”

26. Awareness will be raised and capacity increased among parliamentarians, who can play a crucial role in national accession processes and in further implementation, including the development of basin agreements and national laws. This can be achieved through, among other things, cooperation with the Inter-Parliamentary Union, parliamentary committees responsible for environment and water and the European Parliament.

27. In light of the Convention’s importance to peace, stability and conflict prevention, efforts to raise the awareness of diplomats, who are key actors in promoting its use in water diplomacy and preventing water-related conflicts, will also be made. Targeted events will be organized for diplomats (e.g. by and for embassies) and targeted informational materials will be prepared by the secretariat, the Bureau and focal points.

1.3 Strengthening the role of focal points

28. The capacity and responsibility of focal points, including in countries that are not Parties to the Convention, will be enhanced. Focal points shall be formally designated in accordance with the decision VIII/2 on the nomination and responsibilities of focal points. Focal points are responsible for facilitating implementation at the national level, including, among other things, by promoting the Convention and its tools at the national level among all relevant national stakeholders promoting coordination and participation of national stakeholders with responsibilities in the area of transboundary water cooperation on issues and activities related to the Convention.² Focal points will also be invited to report on their efforts to promote the Convention and to exchange experience and lessons learned. The exchange of information and mutual learning between focal points will be improved, perhaps by establishing a network of focal points.

1.4 Organizing awareness-raising events

29. National events designed to raise awareness of the Convention, its principles and benefits will be organized in non-Parties interested in accession. In addition, the secretariat, the Bureau, Parties and partners will continue to organize events and sessions on the Convention, its achievements and products at international events such as World Water Forums and World Water Weeks, regional and global ministerial conferences and conferences of the Parties to global conventions such as the United Nations Framework

² The Guide for Focal Points on how to better promote the Water Convention (and the Protocol on Water and Health), produced in 2009 (ECE/MP.WAT/2009/13), is outdated as it does not reflect the global opening of the Convention. However, the activities and approaches that it suggests remain relevant and useful in guiding the efforts of focal points.

Convention on Climate Change. The International Decade for Action: Water for Sustainable Development 2018–2028 will also provide opportunities to raise awareness of the Convention.

1.5 Preparing innovative promotional and communication materials

30. Targeted promotional materials, including brochures, films, newsletters, frequently asked questions (FAQs), collection of good practices and short messages for policymakers, will be prepared for different target audiences. Social media will be used more intensively and the Convention website will be improved. These activities will be undertaken by the secretariat, but experts from Parties' national administrations will also be involved.

Objective 2 Increased accession to the Convention

2.1 Involving Parties in support for accession processes at the technical and political levels

31. Experience and advice from current Parties is particularly valuable to prospective Parties, which usually have many questions and doubts. Parties can use their diplomatic channels to explain to possible future Parties the benefits of acceding to the Convention, which requires the preparation of advocacy materials highlighting the benefits of accession and responding to frequently asked questions about the Convention. They can also provide technical support to prospective future Parties, for example by explaining how to implement certain provisions of the Convention, providing technical and legal guidance throughout the accession process and helping to address specific difficulties and challenges. One approach to such support might be the "twinning" of current and prospective Parties. Bilateral development assistance will also be an important means to support for accession processes.

2.2 Creating a pool of experts on the Convention

32. Parties will compile a list of experts on the Convention in general or on specific aspects of its implementation (e.g. from a legal or technical perspective) who stand ready to answer questions from prospective Parties, conduct short studies or participate in country visits in order to facilitate both accession and implementation. The list will include names, contact details and areas of expertise.

33. As mandated by the Bureau, the Implementation Committee will also continue to support the secretariat in answering questions from non-Parties interested in acceding to the Convention.

2.3 Exchanging experience and mutual learning between countries working towards accession

34. Because countries engaged in the accession process often have similar doubts and questions and face similar institutional, technical and administrative challenges, exchanging experience on these challenges, potential solutions and lessons learned is particularly useful. Exchanges between recent Parties and countries in the accession process will be arranged between the respective countries themselves. This can be done informally, for instance in the margins of Convention's meetings or at other relevant global or regional events – or more formally, by organizing side events or specific meetings.

2.4 Promoting regional and basin-wide approaches to accession

35. Regional coordination and cooperation in acceding to the Convention can be particularly effective as they allow countries to benefit from the Convention and facilitate its implementation.

36. Ratification by all riparian countries in a river basin will be promoted, for example, by working with the respective river basin commission to raise capacity on the Convention and by encouraging one or more interested basin countries to promote the Convention with the other riparians and motivate them to accede to it.

37. Similarly, regional organizations are important institutions in promoting regional debates and regional accession processes. Cooperation with regional organizations will therefore be strengthened in order to raise awareness of the Convention and build related capacities.

38. Convention “champions” (countries, basins and/or individuals) who can be instrumental in motivating their neighbours to join will be identified and mobilized.

Objective 3

Increased support for implementation of the Convention and for transboundary water management

3.1 Strengthening capacity to accede to and implement the Convention

39. National events will be organized, primarily by focal points, in order to build capacity on the Convention among the different concerned authorities in their countries and, where relevant, of NGOs, development partners and international actors. Where appropriate, such events will also involve representatives of neighbouring countries.

40. Workshops designed to build capacity on the Convention at the basin and regional levels will also be organized by regional organizations, river basin organizations and others.

41. “Train the trainer” events will be organized in order to expand the pool of experts, including from regional and river basin organizations, donors, academia and civil society, who are able to build capacity regarding the Convention, accession and implementation.

42. Cooperation with think tanks, academia, non-governmental organizations and professional knowledge partners will also be increased as they play an important role by building strong experts who can support the Convention’s implementation and transboundary cooperation. These actors also contribute by providing a critical reflection on the Convention, its achievements and challenges and future perspectives.

3.2 Using the reporting mechanism under the Convention to support implementation

43. By highlighting progress achieved and drawing attention to areas that need improvement, the Convention’s reporting is a powerful tool to support implementation. Countries will disseminate their reports broadly at the national and transboundary levels, in particular to inform decision-makers of the benefits arising from cooperation and from implementation of the Convention and of the challenges to be addressed.

44. Particularly where no other basis for or common objectives of cooperation have been agreed, countries will use their reports at the transboundary level to develop roadmaps for strengthened transboundary water cooperation and for implementation of the Convention.

45. Reports will also be used to guide work under the Convention and the work of other actors on matters relating to transboundary water cooperation. Therefore, the results of the reporting will be exploited to define and to develop the Convention’s triennial programmes of work so that implementation problems encountered by Parties and non-Parties can be addressed. The results will be widely promoted among other actors — such as development partners, international financial institutions, and non-governmental organizations, in order to help them to tailor their interventions.

3.3 Enhancing the impact of guidance material under the Convention

46. Numerous guidance documents and different soft law tools, including model provisions, have been developed under the Convention since the 1990s in order to support implementation of the Convention and transboundary water cooperation. As many of these are not well known, even among current Parties, information on them will be disseminated and their use by Parties and non-Parties will be promoted, including by translating them into additional languages (particularly French and Spanish).

47. At the request of countries and based on decisions taken by the Convention's governing bodies, some of these tools might be updated to reflect the state of art on the topic and the most recent relevant experience, including that of countries and basins outside the ECE region.

3.4 Support for the negotiation of new agreements and improved implementation of existing ones through the Convention's network

48. Increased efforts will be needed to support the negotiation of new agreements on transboundary surface waters and groundwaters and improved implementation of existing ones, especially among countries in the accession process. In light of the key role of joint bodies in the effective implementation of agreements and in successful transboundary water cooperation, support to the creation and strengthening of joint bodies will also be required. Support will be provided to regions or basins with difficult transboundary relations, tensions and conflicts. The majority of this assistance will be provided by Parties' ministries and institutions responsible for transboundary water management, international organizations, river basin organizations and donors through their ongoing and future efforts to help countries and basins to develop and implement transboundary agreements. The Convention and its guidance materials, tools and mechanisms will be used in these undertakings.

49. Support can also be provided in different, more indirect ways, for example, through existing publications and soft law tools (including the Principles for Effective Joint Bodies for Transboundary Water Cooperation)³ and by preparing new guidance materials, arranging regular exchanges of experience, providing legal advice and implementing projects on the ground.

3.5 Exploring new financing models for supporting implementation of the Convention

50. The Convention's global opening will inevitably lead to increased resource requirements in order to support its implementation and to respond to requests from a growing number of Parties. The existing Convention's financing mechanism will need to be reviewed accordingly and it will be important to broaden the financial support to the Convention by countries and other actors. Various options could be explored such as strengthening the Convention's role as a broker for direct financing by development partners and international financing institutions and establishing an equitable and predictable mandatory contribution scheme. The partnerships with the Global Environment Facility (GEF), international financial institutions and bilateral donors (see actions 5.3 and 5.4 below) would be important aspects of this new financing approach.

³ ECE/MP.WAT/50, see www.unece.org/index.php?id=48658.

Objective 4

Increased support for implementation of water-related Sustainable Development Goals, in particular target 6.5, through the Convention

4.1 Monitoring and review of progress towards SDG target 6.5

51. ECE and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), as custodian agencies for Sustainable Development Goal indicator 6.5.2 (Proportion of transboundary basin area with an operational arrangement for water cooperation), will support countries' efforts monitoring the indicator and track progress at the national, regional and global levels. This will be done by, among other things, building capacities, providing countries with technical advice on reporting, preparing analyses of progress in transboundary water cooperation and providing other input to the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development.

52. The synergies established between the processes of reporting on indicator 6.5.2 and under the Water Convention bring many benefits to all countries – whether they are Parties to the Convention or not. Reporting allows all countries to produce a complete picture of the situation concerning transboundary water cooperation. Combining reporting under the Convention and indicator 6.5.2 avoids duplication of efforts. The use of the reporting template makes it possible to track progress more closely beyond the indicator value and to better describe the situation. This is also valuable because the indicator is inevitably based on a number of criteria defining minimum thresholds and the more detailed information in the template, based on the reporting under the Convention, makes it possible to track progress under each of these criteria.

53. The intergovernmental framework of the Convention, such as the Working Group on Integrated Water Resources Management and the Meeting of the Parties, will be a key platform for reviewing the progress of transboundary cooperation worldwide by monitoring indicator 6.5.2 and developing important political and technical responses to emerging challenges.

4.2 Supporting the achievement of SDG target 6.5

54. In addition to monitoring, the Convention and the activities set out in its programme of work will support the achievement of SDG target 6.5, and particularly its transboundary cooperation dimension, including through capacity-building, projects on the ground, exchange of experience and technical and policy advice.

Objective 5

Increased partnerships and synergies with other actors

55. As described in decision VII/4 on cooperation with partners for the implementation of the Convention (see ECE/MP.WAT/49/Add.2), partners have always played a key role in the implementation of the Convention and the Convention will continue to seek mutually beneficial cooperation with existing and new partners. Partners will be even more crucial in the future as the Convention's global implementation will depend primarily on effective current and future partners who engage in its promotion and support its implementation outside the ECE region.

56. In order to be sustainable, partnerships must be reciprocal, mutually beneficial and based on common interests while preserving each partner's distinctive added value. Partners will therefore differ from region to region and from topic to topic.

57. In order to facilitate such effective partnerships, both the Convention and its partners will require additional resources; joint fundraising will therefore be pursued.

58. Depending on the needs of the partners and the nature and content of the partnerships, such cooperation could be formalized, for example through memorandums of understanding, exchanges of letters or decisions on cooperation to be adopted by the Meeting of the Parties and the relevant partner's governing structure.

5.1 Promoting a regional approach to global implementation of the Convention

59. In order to ensure proximity to the countries concerned and a strong historical knowledge and understanding of specific situations, regional organizations will have a key role to play in promoting implementation of the Convention, particularly outside the ECE region.

60. The United Nations regional economic and social commissions will be important partners in the United Nations system. Moreover, other regional organizations with a mandate and experience on transboundary water issues (e.g. the African Ministers' Council on Water or the Organization of American States) will be key. Sub-regional organizations (e. g. the Association of Southeast Asian Nations or regional economic communities in Africa) also have an important role to play.

61. Cooperation with such regional and sub-regional organizations will thus be strengthened, joint activities will be developed and implemented and, in order to support such efforts, joint fundraising will be undertaken. To ensure the long-term sustainability of efforts, cooperation might be formalized, for instance through memorandums of understanding or by other means. Partnership with the Convention and related joint activities should become part of the mandate and programmes of work of these partners.

62. The establishment of additional regional collaborative centres under the Convention, hosted by Parties, in order to support implementation of the Convention in different regions or subregions (following the model of the International Water Assessment Centre (IWAC), hosted by Kazakhstan) could also be promoted.

63. Joint bodies and river basin commissions play a crucial role in implementation of the Convention and can also support its promotion, for example by informing their member States about the Convention, hosting meetings related to it and supporting accession processes. Cooperation with joint bodies will therefore be enhanced in thematic areas such as climate change adaptation and the water-food-energy-ecosystems nexus, as well as in supporting national accession processes.

5.2 Strengthening the cooperation with the Global Environment Facility

64. Cooperation with the Global Environment Facility (GEF) will be strengthened in accordance with decision VI/4 since, on the one hand, GEF plays a key role in supporting the Convention's implementation and, on the other hand, the Convention provides a framework for facilitating GEF interventions and ensuring long-term sustainability of its project results. Moreover, the Convention's activities related to monitoring and assessment, including monitoring progress on transboundary cooperation, also provide a useful means of measuring the long-term impact of GEF interventions and can guide future GEF support in this area, including by making transboundary water issues more prominent and visible from the political point of view and increasing GEF the Facility's support for them.

65. The Convention's secretariat has been increasingly involved in the implementation of GEF projects and this trend will be sustained, including by endeavouring to ensure that GEF funded projects support activities under the Convention. Conversely, activities under the Convention will continue to pave the way for GEF funding and other future investments.

66. Further approaches to cooperation and mutual support with the GEF secretariat, GEF agencies, GEF Council and GEF Assembly will be explored by the secretariat, the Bureau and the Meeting of the Parties.

5.3 Consolidating cooperation with long-established partners and enhancing their use of the Convention's framework

67. Many international organizations, both within and outside the United Nations family, and multilateral environmental agreements are long-established partners in the promotion of transboundary water issues. The globalization of the Convention will provide an opportunity to revisit and further strengthen cooperation with some of them, building on the results achieved so far. The objective will be to geographically expand and further systematize the existing cooperation and bring together different networks of expertise, including across sectors.

68. Efforts to promote partners' use of the Convention's institutional framework will be made in order to enhance the exchange of knowledge, upscale the impact of individual actor efforts, avoid duplication, promote synergies and facilitate the development of new initiatives. Specific means of promoting exchanges between and coordination of stakeholders in the area of transboundary water cooperation will be explored.

5.4 Reaching out to new partners: international financial institutions, civil society and the private sector

International financial institutions and multilateral and bilateral donors

69. Financing transboundary water cooperation is a widespread challenge and the Convention, its activities and its institutional framework can play an important role in increasing access to financial resources and the efficiency of their use and improving long-term monitoring of the impact of interventions.

70. Cooperation with the World Bank, regional development banks and multilateral and bilateral donors will be further strengthened and ways of ensuring mutual support and increasing financing for transboundary water cooperation and implementation of the Convention will be explored.

71. As a constituency of both the Convention and the international financing institutions, Parties will play a key role in promoting such convergence.

72. The coherence of interventions by bilateral donors will also be promoted; for example, the development cooperation strategies of Parties to the Convention should clearly support the Convention's implementation.

73. The possibility and potential usefulness of establishing a donors' coordination mechanism will also be examined.

Civil society and non-governmental organizations

74. Civil society and non-governmental organizations have always played an important role in the Convention's activities and are important stakeholders in fostering transboundary water cooperation at the national and regional levels. Cooperation with civil society and relevant NGOs will be increased in order to reinforce their positive role in promoting cooperation and accession to, implementation of and compliance with the Convention, including the development and implementation of basin agreements and the establishment and work of joint bodies.

Private sector

75. The private sector, and particularly its investments, will play a growing role in the development of transboundary basins and in potential future conflicts regarding the use of

transboundary water resources. Ways to engage with the private sector and the specific role of the Convention and its Parties will be explored.

Programme of work of the International Water Assessment Centre for 2019–2021

I. Introduction

A. Background

1. At its second session (The Hague, Netherlands, 23–25 March 2000), the Meeting of the Parties to the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes (Water Convention) established the International Water Assessment Centre as the Convention's collaborative centre.

2. From 2000 to 2008, the Centre was hosted by the Government of the Netherlands. Between 2009 and 2012, the Centre was hosted by Slovakia, at the Slovak Hydrometeorological Institute.

3. At its seventh session (Budapest, 17–19 November 2015), the Meeting of the Parties welcomed the offer of Kazakhstan to host the International Water Assessment Centre as of 2017. It entrusted Kazakhstan and the Bureau, with the support of the secretariat, to closely cooperate to define future arrangements concerning the Centre, including its terms of reference and programme of work, and to report in that regard to the Working Group on Integrated Water Resources Management at its next meeting and to the Meeting of the Parties at its eighth session (ECE/MP.WAT/49, para. 79).

4. The Centre's terms of reference (ECE/MP.WAT/WG.1/2017/4) were reviewed by the Working Group at its twelfth meeting (Geneva, 5–6 July 2017).

5. Based on those terms of reference, the Memorandum of Understanding between the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan and the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe on hosting the International Water Assessment Centre in Kazakhstan was signed on 30 May 2017. The Centre was established in Astana in July 2017 and was officially opened on 7 December 2017.

6. In accordance with its terms of reference, the main purpose of the Centre is to support the implementation and application of the Water Convention and, as relevant, its Protocol on Water and Health, and their respective programmes of work. The Centre will focus its activities on countries neighbouring Kazakhstan, other Central Asian countries and other countries inside and outside the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) region, as appropriate.

B. Purpose of the work programme

7. The purpose of the work programme for the International Water Assessment Centre is to assist in the implementation and application of the Water Convention through the implementation of specific activities in selected areas of work in the Convention's programme of work for 2019–2021.

C. Possible sources of funding

8. The implementation of the programme of work will depend on the availability of resources. The Government of Kazakhstan will finance certain activities of the Centre. Moreover, based on preliminary consultations between the Centre and prospective partners and donors, the Centre will endeavour to attract funding from the Slovak development

programme, SlovakAid, and from the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) Science for Peace and Security Programme to implement its programme of work. Additional sources of funding will be sought from bilateral and multilateral donors, including Parties to the Convention.

9. To enhance the effectiveness of the planned activities, the International Water Assessment Centre will strive to strengthen cooperation on, and the coherence and complementarity of its activities with, relevant initiatives, programmes and activities on transboundary waters in the Central Asian region and in neighbouring countries.

II. Programme of work for 2019–2021 for the International Water Assessment Centre

10. The following activities of the International Water Assessment Centre for 2019–2021 are closely related to the Convention's programme of work for the same period (ECE/MP.WAT/54/Add.1). The Centre will strive to contribute to the overall implementation of the respective programme areas under the Water Convention by communicating with the lead Parties and consulting the Convention's Bureau and secretariat, as appropriate.

A. Activities related to programme area 2 of the Convention: supporting monitoring, assessment and information sharing in transboundary basins

11. Activities of the Centre's work programme related to programme area 2 of the Convention's programme of work – supporting monitoring, assessment and information sharing in transboundary basins – are aimed at supporting Central Asian and neighbouring countries in developing joint monitoring and assessment of transboundary waters and include the implementation of the projects set out in items 1.1–1.3 below.

1.1. Development of an information monitoring database for the transboundary river basin of the Ural (Zhayik) River

Objective: Improvement of the efficiency of water resources management in the transboundary Ural (Zhayik) River by developing a unified information database on the Ural (Zhayik) River basin and deepening cooperation between Kazakhstan and the Russian Federation in the management of joint transboundary rivers.

This activity is aimed at analysing the global and regional experience in creating information databases on transboundary water bodies and developing a concept and an information database website for the basin of the transboundary Ural (Zhayik) River in a pilot mode. The project activities include training in the management and use of the information database, technical meetings and development of recommendations for the implementation of the database in the operational water management of transboundary rivers of the two countries. National experts of Kazakhstan and the Russian Federation will be involved in the work.

This activity will have synergy with the activities on exchange of data and information under the Water Convention, notably the global workshop planned for 2019, contributing experience and drawing upon the good practices to be identified.

Expected implementation period: 2020–2021.

Budget Estimate: to be confirmed.

Possible funding source: Government of Kazakhstan.

1.2. Development of cooperation in the field of water quality assessment

Objective: Contribution to the cooperation of Central Asian countries in the field of water quality assessment methods. Facilitation of the exchange of scientific knowledge between Central Asian countries and Slovakia.

The activity's design will take into account and build upon the ECE-Regional Environmental Centre for Central Asia project, "Water Quality in Central Asia".⁴ Opportunities to use the Water Quality Expert Group, established in previous projects, for coordination and liaison with the countries will be explored.

The work will be carried out in close cooperation with the Slovak Hydrometeorological Institute and with the involvement of national institutions of Central Asian countries. It is planned to hold a seminar of experts in Slovakia.

Expected implementation period: to be determined.

Budget estimate: €80,000–€100,000.

Possible funding source: NATO Science for Peace and Security Programme.

1.3. Training in hydrometeorological services

Objective: Training of specialists in the field of meteorological and hydrological data assessment, and assessment and prediction of the status of transboundary water bodies.

As part of this work, it is planned to conduct training for experts from Central Asia and Afghanistan in close cooperation with the Slovak Hydrometeorological Institute.

The training will focus on such issues as the use of modern methods and equipment (geographic information systems, processing large amounts of data and development of indicators and criteria), and others.

Expected implementation period: to be determined.

Budget estimate: €60,000.

Possible funding source: NATO Science for Peace and Security Programme.

B. Activities related to programme area 3 of the Convention: Promoting an integrated and intersectoral approach to water management at all levels

12. The activities of the Centre related to promoting an integrated and intersectoral approach to water management at all levels, programme area 3 of the Convention's programme of work, are aimed at assisting Central Asian and neighbouring countries in the development of equitable and sustainable water allocation mechanisms, and enhancing knowledge of the criteria, mechanisms, tools and best practices for allocating water resources in transboundary river basins, and include the projects detailed in items 2.1 and 2.2 below.

⁴ A compilation of documents from the Water Quality in Central Asia project is available from: www.unece.org/environmental-policy/conventions/water/areas-of-work-of-the-convention/envwatercentralasia/water-quality-wq-project-2015.html.

2.1. Identification of good practices and approaches for supporting water allocation in a transboundary context

Objective: Contribute to the identification of good practices and the development of a common methodology and principles for sustainable water allocation in a transboundary context.

The work involves the compilation of a review of best practices in the allocation of water resources in a transboundary context and the development of proposals for a common methodology for sustainable and equitable water allocation with the participation of international experts. During the implementation of the project, a regional meeting will be organized for Central Asian and neighbouring countries to review and discuss proposals for the draft guidance document on the sustainable allocation of water resources in a transboundary context. The results of the work on the project will be submitted to the Working Group on Integrated Water Resources Management and the Bureau of the Meeting of the Parties to the Water Convention.

Expected implementation period: 2020–2021.

Budget estimate: to be determined.

Possible funding source: Government of Kazakhstan.

2.2 Training on the safety of hydraulic structures

Objective: To assist countries in improving their knowledge concerning the safety of hydraulic structures.

In close cooperation with Slovakia, training courses will be organized for experts from Central Asian countries. The first course will be of a preparatory character. In this course, the needs of countries will be identified with a view to designing the training of various focus groups (hydrologists, meteorologists, glaciologists and others), including the training of technical personnel, and the development of a special course on dam safety for different levels of specialists. Key background information for this will be obtained from the Water Convention's dam safety project and related documentation.⁵ The courses will cover such issues as dam and other hydraulic structure safety, legislation, institutional and financial mechanisms and cross-border cooperation.

Expected implementation period: to be determined.

Budget estimate: €60,000.

Possible funding source: NATO Science for Peace and Security Programme.

C. Activities related to programme area 4 of the Convention: Adapting to climate change in transboundary basins

13. Many transboundary river, lake and groundwater basins are very vulnerable to the negative impacts of climate change. Transboundary cooperation in climate change adaptation helps to make adaptation more effective and cost-efficient. Activities of the International Water Assessment Centre related to this area of work, programme area 4 of the Convention's programme of work, are aimed at developing proposals to increase the effectiveness of measures taken by countries to adapt to climate change and to mitigate its consequences in transboundary river basins.

⁵ An overview is available at www.unece.org/env/water/damsafety.html.

14. Activities of the Centre's work programme in this area include the project detailed in item 3.1 below.

3.1. Integrated drought management in a transboundary context

Objective: To assist countries in planning a system of measures to mitigate the effects of droughts.

It is planned to draw up drought risk maps, to review methodologies for the preparation of drought management plans in Central Asia and neighbouring countries (including monitoring, early warning and forecasting) and to develop risk and impact assessment methodologies and measures to mitigate the effects of drought. Special attention will be paid to assessing the opportunities for improving data exchange between countries and developing recommendations for mitigating the effects of drought, the possibility of using forecast models for droughts, increasing water productivity and studying global insurance experience, in particular with regard to recovering farmers' losses in droughts.

The work will be carried out in close cooperation with the Global Water Partnership in Central and Eastern Europe and the Water Research Institute of Slovakia. National institutes of the countries of Central Asia and Afghanistan will be involved in the work. Work done under the World Meteorological Institute Integrated Drought Management Programme and other relevant projects and initiatives will be studied as a reference.

Expected implementation period: to be determined.

Budget estimate: €250,000.

Possible funding source: SlovakAid.

Decision VIII/1 Reporting under the Convention

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

Determined to facilitate the implementation and application of and compliance with the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes (Water Convention),

Recalling article 17, paragraph 2 (f), of the Convention, which states that the Meeting of the Parties shall consider and undertake any additional action that may be required for the achievements of the purposes of the Convention,

Also recalling article 17, paragraph 2, of the Convention, which states that, at their meetings, the Parties shall keep under continuous review the implementation of the Convention,

Further recalling its decision VII/2 through which it introduced a regular reporting mechanism under the Convention, starting with a pilot reporting exercise,

Recognizing that reporting is key for reviewing and enhancing national implementation of the Convention as well as accession to it,

Also recognizing that reporting provides a means to enhance basin-specific cooperation,

Noting that regular reporting may also serve as a means to keep the public informed of measures taken to implement the Convention,

Underlining that reporting provides information that helps to identify the specific needs of basins, and thereby supports the mobilization of resources, for example, for capacity-building and technical assistance activities,

Noting that reporting also allows for the identification of emerging issues and difficulties in the implementation of the Convention, and so can inform the development of future programmes of work under the Convention and the work of the Implementation Committee,

Recognizing that reporting promotes the accumulation and exchange of lessons learned, good practices and experience to enhance implementation of the Convention,

Recalling the adoption by the international community of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including the establishment of Sustainable Development Goal 6 to “ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all”, with a target calling for transboundary cooperation to implement integrated water resources management (target 6.5),

Also recalling the adoption by the United Nations General Assembly in July 2017 of the global indicator framework for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development which includes indicator 6.5.2 on transboundary water cooperation for which the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) have been designated as custodian agencies,

Recognizing the relevance of the Water Convention as an instrument that can help countries reach the Sustainable Development Goal on clean water and sanitation,

Emphasizing the role of reporting under the Convention as a useful means for reviewing countries’ progress towards achieving target 6.5,

Expressing appreciation for the outcomes of the first reporting exercise under the Water Convention and on indicator 6.5.2 carried out in 2017–2018,

Recognizing the many benefits of the first reporting exercise highlighted by countries, such as improved cooperation at the national level, increased political attention to transboundary water cooperation and exchange of experience with other countries and, when templates have been filled out together or in coordination, discussion and agreement on issues and problems with other riparian countries, especially in the framework of existing joint bodies,

1. *Welcomes* the submission of 38 reports by Parties on the implementation of the Convention during the pilot reporting exercise;
2. *Also welcomes* the 106 responses by countries in the first reporting exercise on Sustainable Development Goal Indicator 6.5.2;
3. *Commends* the alignment of the reporting under the Convention and the reporting on Sustainable Development Goal indicator 6.5.2 to increase synergies between the processes and avoid duplication of efforts,
4. *Takes note with appreciation* of the first report on implementation of the Convention prepared by the secretariat and the indicator report on progress on Sustainable Development Goal indicator 6.5.2 prepared by ECE and UNESCO;
5. *Calls upon* countries to make use of the reports in order to improve their transboundary cooperation, for example by setting national or basin-wide targets;
6. *Adopts* the revised reporting template as contained in annex II for future reporting under the Convention;
7. *Decides* that the frequency of reporting under the Convention should be every three years, in line with the frequency of the Meeting of the Parties;
8. *Also decides* that the deadline for the submission of reports in the next reporting exercise will be 30 June 2020;
9. *Further decides* that subsequent reporting deadlines are set triennially on 30 June;
10. *Requests* all Parties to submit to the secretariat their completed templates by the set deadlines;
11. *Strongly encourages* all countries sharing transboundary waters to report on Sustainable Development Goal indicator 6.5.2;
12. *Encourages* riparian countries to cooperate when preparing their national reports;
13. *Entrusts* the Working Group on Integrated Water Resources Management with the support of the secretariat to develop a guide for reporting under the Convention, in time for the next reporting cycle;
14. *Requests* the secretariat to make the national reports under the Convention publicly available on the Convention's website in the languages in which they were submitted;
15. *Also requests* the secretariat, based on the national reports received, to prepare regular reports for future sessions of the Meeting of the Parties on the implementation of the Convention, pending availability of resources;
16. *Further requests* the secretariat to develop a proposal for an online reporting system, including technical and financial implications, for review and discussion by the Bureau and the Working Group on Integrated Water Resources Management;

17. *Also requests* the secretariat to carry out capacity-building activities, pending availability of resources. Such activities should, among others, promote the findings of the national reports and the setting of national or basin targets on transboundary cooperation, enhance the quality of future reports and promote broad participation in future reporting exercises;

18. *Invites* UNESCO to closely cooperate with the secretariat in the development of the guide for reporting under the Convention, the proposal for an online reporting system and on capacity building activities;

19. *Requests* the Working Group on Integrated Water Resources Management and the Working Group on Monitoring and Assessment to organize regular sessions allowing countries to review progress on transboundary water cooperation and exchange experience on reporting.

Annex I

Calculation of Sustainable Development Goal indicator 6.5.2

I. Calculation of Sustainable Development Goal indicator 6.5.2⁶

Methodology

1. Using the information gathered in section II, the information gathered in this section allows for the calculation of Sustainable Development Goal global indicator 6.5.2, which is defined as the proportion of transboundary basin area with an operational arrangement for water cooperation.
2. The step-by-step monitoring methodology for indicator 6.5.2, developed by ECE and UNESCO in the framework of UN-Water, should be referred to for details on the necessary data, the definitions and the calculation.⁷
3. The value of the indicator at the national level is derived by adding up the surface area in a country of those transboundary basins (river and lake basins and aquifers) that are covered by an operational arrangement and dividing the area obtained by the aggregate total area in a country of all transboundary basins (both river and lake basins, and aquifers).
4. Transboundary basins are basins of transboundary waters, that is, of any surface waters (notably rivers, lakes) or groundwaters which mark, cross or are located on boundaries between by two or more States. For the purpose of the calculation of this indicator, for a transboundary river or lake, the basin area is determined by the extent of its catchment. For groundwater, the area to be considered is the extent of the aquifer.
5. An “arrangement for water cooperation” is a bilateral or multilateral treaty, convention, agreement or other formal arrangement among riparian countries that provides a framework for cooperation on transboundary water management.
6. For an arrangement to be considered “operational” all the following criteria need to be fulfilled:
 - (a) There is a joint body, joint mechanism or commission (e.g., a river basin organization) for transboundary cooperation (criterion 1);
 - (b) There are regular (at least once per year) formal communications between riparian countries in form of meetings (either at the political or technical level) (criterion 2);
 - (c) Joint objectives, a common strategy, a joint or coordinated management plan, or an action plan have been agreed upon by the riparian countries (criterion 3);
 - (d) There is a regular (at least once per year) exchange of data and information (criterion 4).

Calculation of indicator 6.5.2

7. Please list in the tables below the transboundary basins (rivers and lakes and aquifers) in your country’s territory and provide the following information for each of them:
 - (a) The country/ies with which the basin is shared;

⁶ Section I on the calculation of indicator 6.5.2 is not part of the template for reporting under the Convention. ECE and UNESCO may make additional changes to this section during the next round of reporting on indicator 6.5.2.

⁷ Available from the UN-Water website: www.unwater.org/publications/step-step-methodology-monitoring-transboundary-cooperation-6-5-2/ (version 11 January 2017).

- (b) The surface area of the basin (the catchment of rivers or lakes and the aquifer in the case of groundwater) within the territory of your country (in square kilometres (km²));
 - (c) Whether a map and/or a geographical information system (GIS) shapefile of the basin has been provided;
 - (d) Whether there is an arrangement in force for the basin;
 - (e) The verification of each of the four criteria to assess operability;
 - (f) The surface area of the basin within the territory of your country which is covered by a cooperation arrangement that is operational according to the above criteria.
8. In case an operational arrangement is in place only for a sub-basin or a portion of a basin, please list this sub-basin just after the transboundary basin it is part of. In case there is an operational arrangement for the whole basin, do not list sub-basins in the table below.

Table 1
Transboundary river or lake basin (please add rows as needed)

<i>Name of transboundary river or lake basin/sub-basin</i>	<i>It is a basin or a sub-basin?^a</i>	<i>Countries shared with</i>	<i>Surface area of the basin/sub-basin (in km²) within the territory</i>	<i>Map and/or GIS shapefile provided (yes/no)</i>	<i>Covered by an arrangement (entirely, partly, no) (Ref. to questions in sect. II)</i>	<i>Criterion 1 applied (yes/no) (Ref. to questions in sect. II)</i>	<i>Criterion 2 applied (yes/no) (Ref. to questions in sect. II)</i>	<i>Criterion 3 applied (yes/no) (Ref. to questions in sect. II)</i>	<i>Criterion 4 applied (yes/no) (Ref. to questions in sect. II)</i>	<i>Surface area of the basin/sub-basin (in km²) covered by an operational arrangement within the territory of the country</i>
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(A)
Total surface area of transboundary basins/sub-basins of rivers and lakes covered by operational arrangements within the territory of the country (in km²)



(do not double count sub-basins)

(B)
Total surface area of transboundary basins of rivers and lakes within the territory of the country (in km²)



(do not double count sub-basins)

^a List sub-basins after the basin they belong to.

Table 2
Transboundary aquifers (please add rows as needed)

<i>Name of the transboundary aquifer</i>	<i>Countries shared with</i>	<i>Surface area of the aquifer (in km²) within the territory of the country</i>	<i>Map and/or GIS shapefile provided (yes/no)</i>	<i>Covered by an aquifer specific arrangement (entirely, partly, no) (Ref. to questions in sect. II)</i>	<i>Covered within an arrangement not specific to the aquifer^a (entirely, partly, no) (Ref. to questions in sect. II)</i>	<i>Criterion 1 applied (yes/no) (Ref. to questions in sect. II)</i>	<i>Criterion 2 applied (yes/no) (Ref. to questions in sect. II)</i>	<i>Criterion 3 applied (yes/no) (Ref. to questions in sect. II)</i>	<i>Criterion 4 applied (yes/no) (Ref. to questions in sect. II)</i>	<i>Surface area of the aquifer (in km²) covered by an operational arrangement within the territory of the country</i>

(C)
Sub-total: surface area of transboundary aquifers covered by operational arrangements (in km²)

(D)
Total surface area of transboundary aquifers (in km²)

^a In the text of the agreement or arrangement or in the practice.

Indicator value for the country**Surface waters:**

Percentage of surface area of transboundary basins of rivers and lakes covered by an operational arrangement:

$$A/B \times 100 =$$

Aquifers:

Percentage of surface area of transboundary aquifers covered by an operational arrangement:

$$C/D \times 100 =$$

Sustainable Development Goal indicator 6.5.2:

Percentage of surface area of transboundary basins covered by an operational arrangement:

$$((A + C)/(B + D)) \times 100 =$$

Spatial information

If a map (or maps) of the transboundary surface water catchments and transboundary aquifers (i.e., “transboundary basins”) is available, please consider attaching them. Ideally, shapefiles of the basin and aquifer delineations that can be viewed in GIS should be sent.

Additional information

If the respondent has comments that clarify assumptions or interpretations made for the calculation, or the level of certainty of the spatial information, please write them here:

Annex II

Revised template for reporting under the Convention

Does your country have transboundary agreements or arrangements for the protection and/or management of transboundary waters (i.e., rivers, lakes or groundwater), whether bilateral or multilateral?

Yes /No

If yes, list the bilateral and multilateral agreements or arrangements (listing for each of the countries concerned): [fill in]

II. Questions for each transboundary basin, sub-basin, part of a basin, or group of basins (river, lake or aquifer)

Please complete this second section for each transboundary basin (river or lake basin, or aquifer), sub-basin, part of a basin or a group of basins covered by the same agreement or arrangement where conditions are similar.⁸ In some instances, you may provide information on both a basin and one or more of its sub-basins or parts thereof, for example, where you have agreements⁹ or arrangements on both the basin and its sub-basin. You may coordinate your responses with other States with which your country shares transboundary waters, or even prepare a joint report. General information on transboundary water management at the national level should be provided in section III and not repeated here.

Please reproduce this whole section with its questions for each transboundary basin, sub-basin, part of a basin or group of basins for which you will provide a reply.

Name of the transboundary basin, sub-basin, part of a basin or group of basins: [fill in]

List of the riparian States: [fill in]

In the case of an aquifer, what is the nature of the aquifer and its relation with the river or lake basin:

Unconfined aquifer connected to the river or lake

Unconfined aquifer with no or limited relation with surface water

Deep confined aquifer

Other

Please describe: [fill in]

No information

Percentage of your country’s territory within the basin, sub-basin, part of a basin or group of basins: [fill in]

1. Is there one or more transboundary (bilateral or multilateral) agreement(s) or arrangement(s) on this basin, sub-basin, part of a basin or group of basins?

One or more agreements or arrangements exist and are in force

⁸ In principle, section II should be submitted for every transboundary basin, river, lake or aquifer, in the country, but States may decide to group basins in which their share is small or leave out basins in which their share is very minor, e.g., below 1 per cent.

⁹ In section II, “agreement” covers all kinds of treaties, conventions and agreements ensuring cooperation in the field of transboundary waters. Section II can also be completed for other types of arrangements, such as memorandums of understanding.

Agreement or arrangement developed but not in force

Agreement or arrangement developed, but not in force for all riparians

Please insert the name of the agreement(s) or arrangement(s) [fill in]

Agreement or arrangement is under development

No agreement or arrangement

If there is no agreement or arrangement or it is not in force, please explain briefly why not and provide information on any plans to address the situation: [fill in]

If there is no agreement or arrangement and no joint body or mechanism for the transboundary basin, sub-basin, part of a basin or group of basins then jump to question 4; if there is no agreement or arrangement, but a joint body or mechanism then go to question 3.

Questions 2 and 3 to be completed for each bilateral or multilateral agreement or arrangement in force in the transboundary basin, sub-basin, part of a basin or group of basins.

2. (a) Does this agreement or arrangement specify the area subject to cooperation?

Yes /No

If yes, does it cover the entire basin or group of basins and all riparian States?

Yes /No

Additional explanations? [fill in]

Or, if the agreement or arrangement relates to a sub-basin, does it cover the entire sub-basin?

Yes /No

Additional explanations? [fill in]

Which States (including your own) are bound by the agreement or arrangement?
(Please list): [fill in]

(b) If the agreement or arrangement relates to a river or lake basin or sub-basin, does it also cover aquifers?

Yes /No

If yes, please list the aquifers covered by the agreement or arrangement: [fill in]

(c) What is the sectoral scope of the agreement or arrangement?

All water uses

A single water use or sector

Several water uses or sectors

If one or several water uses or sectors, please list (check as appropriate):

Water uses or sectors

Industry

Agriculture

Transport (e.g., navigation)

Households

Energy: hydropower and other energy types

Fisheries

Tourism

Nature protection

Other (*please list*): [fill in]

(d) What topics or subjects of cooperation are included in the agreement or arrangement?

Procedural and institutional issues

Dispute and conflict prevention and resolution

Institutional cooperation (joint bodies)

Consultation on planned measures

Mutual assistance

Topics of cooperation

Joint vision and management objectives

Joint significant water management issues

Navigation

Human health

Environmental protection (ecosystem)

Water quality

Water quantity or allocation

Cooperation in addressing floods

Cooperation in addressing droughts

Climate change adaptation

Monitoring and exchange

Joint assessments

Data collection and exchange

Joint monitoring

Maintenance of joint pollution inventories

Elaboration of joint water quality objectives

Common early warning and alarm procedures

Exchange of experience between riparian States

Exchange of information on planned measures

Joint planning and management

Development of joint regulations on specific topics

Development of international or joint river, lake or aquifer basin management or action plans

Management of shared infrastructure

Development of shared infrastructure

Other (*please list*): [fill in]

(e) What are the main difficulties and challenges that your country faces with the agreement or arrangement and its implementation, if any?

Aligning implementation of agreement or arrangement with national laws, policies and programmes

Aligning implementation of agreement or arrangement with regional laws, policies and programmes

Lack of financial resources

Insufficient human capacity

Insufficient technical capacity

Tense diplomatic relations

Non-participation of certain riparian countries in the agreement

No significant difficulties

Other (*please describe*): [fill in]

(f) What are the main achievements in implementing the agreement or arrangement and what were the keys to achieving such success? [fill in]

(g) Please attach a copy of the agreement or arrangement or provide the web address of the document (*please attach document or insert web address, if applicable*): [fill in]

3. Is your country a member of any joint body or mechanism for this agreement / or arrangement?

Yes /No

If no, why not? (please explain): [fill in]

Where there is a joint body or mechanism

(a) If there is a joint body or mechanism, which kind of joint body or mechanism (*please tick one*)?

Plenipotentiaries

Bilateral commission

Basin or similar commission

Expert group meeting or meeting of national focal points

Other (*please describe*): [fill in]

(b) Does the joint body or mechanism cover the entire transboundary basin, sub-basin, part of a basin or group of basins?

Yes /No

(c) Which States (including your own) are members of the joint body or mechanism? (*Please list*): [fill in]

(d) Are there any riparian States that are not members of the joint body or mechanism? (please list): [fill in]

(e) If not all riparian States are members of the joint body or mechanism how does the joint body or mechanism cooperate with them?

No cooperation

They have observer status

Other (*please describe*): [fill in]

(f) Does the joint body or mechanism have any of the following features (*please tick the ones applicable*)?

A secretariat

If the secretariat is a permanent one, is it a joint secretariat or does each country host its own secretariat? (Please describe): [fill in]

A subsidiary body or bodies

Please list (e.g., working groups on specific topics): [fill in]

Other features (*please list*): [fill in]

(g) What are the tasks and activities of this joint body or mechanism?¹⁰

Identification of pollution sources

Data collection and exchange

Joint monitoring

Maintenance of joint pollution inventories

Setting emission limits

Elaboration of joint water quality objectives

Management and prevention of flood or drought risks

Preparedness for extreme events, e.g., common early warning and alarm procedures

Surveillance and early warning of water related disease

Water allocation and/or flow regulation

Policy development

Control of implementation

Exchange of experience between riparian States

Exchange of information on existing and planned uses of water and related installations

Settling of differences and conflicts

Consultations on planned measures

Exchange of information on best available technology

¹⁰ This may include tasks according to the agreement or tasks added by the joint body, or its subsidiaries. Both tasks which joint bodies coordinate and tasks which they implement should be included.

- Participation in transboundary EIA
- Development of river, lake or aquifer basin management or action plans
- Management of shared infrastructure
- Addressing hydromorphological alterations
- Climate change adaptation
- Joint communication strategy
- Basin-wide or joint public participation and consultation of, for example, basin management plans
- Joint resources to support transboundary cooperation
- Capacity-building
- Any other tasks (*please list*): [fill in]

(h) What are the main difficulties and challenges that your country faces with the operation of the joint body or mechanism, if any?

- Governance issues
Please describe, if any: [fill in]
- Unexpected planning delays
Please describe, if any: [fill in]
- Lack of resources
Please describe, if true: [fill in]
- Lack of mechanism for implementing measures
Please describe, if true: [fill in]
- Lack of effective measures
Please describe, if true: [fill in]
- Unexpected extreme events
Please describe, if any: [fill in]
- Lack of information and reliable forecasts
Please describe, if any: [fill in]
- Others (*please list and describe, as appropriate*): [fill in]

(i) Does the joint body or mechanism, or its subsidiary bodies meet regularly?

Yes /No

If yes, how frequently does it meet?

- More than once per year
- Once per year
- Less than once per year

(j) What are the main achievements with regards to the joint body or mechanism?
[fill in]

(k) Did the joint body or mechanism ever invite a non-riparian coastal State to cooperate?

Yes /No

If yes, please give details. If no, why not, e.g. are the relevant coastal States also riparian States and therefore already members of the joint body or mechanism? [fill in]

4. Have joint objectives, a common strategy, a joint or coordinated management plan or action plan been agreed for the basin, sub-basin, part of a basin or group of basins?

Yes /No

If yes, please provide further details: [fill in]

5. How is the transboundary basin, sub-basin, part of a basins or group of basins protected, including the protection of ecosystems, in the context of sustainable and rational water use?

Regulation of urbanization, deforestation, and sand and gravel extraction.

Environmental flow norms, including consideration of levels and seasonality

Water quality protection, e.g. nitrates, pesticides, faecal coliforms, heavy metals

Water-related species and habitats protection

Other measures (*please describe*): [fill in]

6. (a) Does your country regularly exchange information and data with other riparian States in the basin, sub-basin, part of a basin or group of basins?

Yes /No

(b) If yes, how often:

More than once per year

Once per year

Less than once per year

(c) Please describe how information is exchanged (e.g. in connection with meetings of joint bodies): [fill in]

(d) If yes, on what subjects are information and data exchanged?

Environmental conditions

Research activities and application of best available techniques

Emission monitoring data

Planned measures taken to prevent, control or reduce transboundary impacts

Point source pollution sources

Diffuse pollution sources

Existing hydromorphological alterations (dams, etc.)

Flows or water levels (including groundwater levels)

Water abstractions

Climatological information

Future planned measures with transboundary impacts, such as infrastructure development

Other subjects (*please list*): [fill in]

Other comments, e.g. spatial coverage of data and information exchange: [fill in]

(e) Is there a shared database or information platform?

Yes /No

(f) Is the database publicly available?

Yes /No

If yes, please provide the web address: [fill in]

(g) What are the main difficulties and challenges to data exchange, if applicable?

Frequency of exchanges

Timing of exchanges

Comparability of data and information

Limited spatial coverage

Inadequate resources (technical and/or financial)

Other (*please describe*): [fill in]

Additional comments: [fill in]

(h) What are the main benefits of data exchange on the basin, sub-basin, part of a basin or group of basins? (*please describe*): [fill in]

7. Do the riparian States carry out joint monitoring in the transboundary basin, sub-basin, part of a basin or group of basins?

Yes /No

(a) If yes, what does the joint monitoring cover?

	<i>Hydrological</i>	<i>Ecological</i>	<i>Chemical</i>
Border surface waters	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Surface waters in the entire basin	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Surface waters on the main watercourse	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Surface waters in part of the basin please describe [fill in]	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Transboundary aquifer(s) (connected or unconnected)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

	<i>Hydrological</i>	<i>Ecological</i>	<i>Chemical</i>
Aquifer(s) in the territory of one riparian connected to a transboundary river or lake	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

(b) If joint monitoring is carried out, how is this done?

National monitoring stations connected through a network or common stations

Please describe: [fill in]

Joint and agreed methodologies

Please describe: [fill in]

Joint sampling

Please describe: [fill in]

Common monitoring network

Please describe: [fill in]

Common agreed parameters

Please describe: [fill in]

(c) Please describe the main achievements regarding joint monitoring, if any: [fill in]

(d) Please describe any difficulties experienced with joint monitoring: [fill in]

8. Do the riparian States carry out joint assessment of the transboundary basin, sub-basin, part of a basin or group of basins?

Yes /No

If yes, please provide the date of the last or only assessment, the frequency and scope (e.g., surface waters or groundwaters only, pollution sources, etc.) of the assessment, and assessment methodology applied: [fill in]

9. Have the riparian States agreed to use joint water quality standards?

Yes /No

If yes, what standards have been applied, e.g. international or regional standards (please specify which), or have national standards of the riparian States been applied? [fill in]

10. What are the measures implemented to prevent or limit the transboundary impact of accidental pollution?

Notification and communication

Coordinated or joint early warning or alarm system for accidental water pollution

Other (*please list*): [fill in]

No measures

If not, why not? What difficulties does your country face in putting in place such measures?: [fill in]

11. What are the measures implemented to prevent or limit the transboundary impact of extreme weather events and climate change?

- Notification and communication
- Coordinated or joint alarm system for floods
- Coordinated or joint alarm system for droughts
- Joint climate change adaptation strategy
- Joint disaster risk reduction strategy
- Other (*please list*): [fill in]
- No measures

If not, why not? What difficulties does your country face in putting in place such measures?: [fill in]

12. Are procedures in place for mutual assistance in case of a critical situation?

Yes /No

If yes, please provide a brief summary: [fill in]

13. Are the public or relevant stakeholders involved in transboundary water management in the basin, sub-basin, part of a basin or group of basins?

Yes /No

If yes, how? (please tick all applicable)

- Stakeholders have observer status in a joint body or mechanism
- Stakeholders have an advisory role in the joint body
- Stakeholders have a decision-making role in the joint body

If yes, please specify the stakeholders for the joint body or mechanism: [fill in]

- Intergovernmental organizations
- Private sectors organizations or associations
- Water user groups or associations
- Academic or research institutions
- Other non-governmental organizations
- General public
- Other (*please specify*): [fill in]
- Availability of information to the public
- Consultation on planned measures or river basin management plans¹¹
- Public involvement
- Other (*please specify*): [fill in]

¹¹ Or, where applicable, aquifer management plans.

Please remember to complete section II for each of the transboundary basins, sub-basin, part of a basin or group of basins. Please also remember to attach copies of agreements or arrangements, if any.

III. Water management at the national level

In this section, you are requested to provide general information on water management at the national level as it relates to transboundary waters. Information on specific transboundary basins, sub-basins, part of basins and groups of basins, should be presented in section II and not repeated here.

1. (a) Does your country’s national legislation, policies, action plans and strategies refer to measures to prevent, control and reduce any transboundary impact?

Yes /No

If yes, please briefly describe the main national laws, policies, action plans and strategies [fill in]

- (b) Does your country’s legislation provide for the following principles?

Precautionary principle Yes /No

Polluter pays principle Yes /No

Sustainable development Yes /No

User pays principle Yes /No

If yes, please briefly describe how these principles are implemented at the national level: [fill in]

- (c) Does your country have a national licensing or permitting system for wastewater discharges and other point source pollution? (e.g., in industry, mining, energy, municipal, wastewater management or other sectors)?

Yes /No

If yes, for which sectors?

- Industry
- Mining
- Energy
- Municipal
- Livestock raising
- Aquaculture

Other (please list): [fill in]

Please briefly describe the licensing or permitting system, indicating whether the system provides for setting emission limits based on best available technology?

If yes, for which sectors? (please list): [fill in]

If not, please explain why not (giving the most important reasons) or provide information if there are plans to introduce a licensing or permitting system: [fill in]

- (d) Are the authorized discharges monitored and controlled?

Yes /No

If yes, how? (Please tick the ones applicable):

- Monitoring of discharges
- Monitoring of physical and chemical impacts on water
- Monitoring of ecological impacts on water
- Conditions on permits
- Inspectorate

Other means (please list): [fill in]

If your country does not have a discharge monitoring system, please explain why not or provide information if there are plans to introduce a discharge monitoring system:
[fill in]

(e) What are the main measures which your country takes to reduce diffuse sources of water pollution on transboundary waters (e.g., from agriculture, transport, forestry or aquaculture)? The measures listed below relate to agriculture, but other sectors may be more significant. Please be sure to include these under "others":

Legislative measures

- Norm for uses of fertilizers
- Norms for uses of manure
- Permitting system
- Bans on or norms for use of pesticides
- Others (please list): [fill in]

Economic and financial measures

- Monetary incentives
- Environmental taxes (such as fertilizer taxes)
- Others (please list): [fill in]

Agricultural extension services

Technical measures

Source control measures

- Crop rotation
- Tillage control
- Winter cover crops
- Others (please list): [fill in]

Other measures

- Buffer/filter strips
- Wetland reconstruction
- Sedimentation traps
- Chemical measures
- Others (please list): [fill in]

Other types of measures

If yes, please list: [fill in]

(f) What are the main measures which your country takes to enhance water resources allocation and use efficiency?

Please tick as appropriate (not all might be relevant)

- A regulatory system regarding water abstraction
- Monitoring and control of abstractions
- Water rights are defined
- Water allocation priorities are listed
- Water-saving technologies
- Advanced irrigation techniques
- Demand management activities
- Other means (please list)

(g) Does your country apply the ecosystems approach?

Yes /No

If yes, please describe how: [fill in]

(h) Does your country take specific measures to prevent the pollution of groundwaters?

Yes /No

If yes, please briefly describe the most important measures: [fill in]

2. Do your national laws require transboundary environmental impact assessment (EIA)?

Yes /No

If yes, please briefly describe the legislative basis, and any related implementing procedures. [fill in]

If not, do other measures provide for transboundary EIA? [fill in]

IV. Final questions

1. What are the main challenges your country faces in cooperating on transboundary waters?

- Differences between national administrative and legal frameworks
- Lack of relevant data and information
- Difficulties in data and information exchange
- Sectoral fragmentation at the national level
- Language barrier
- Resource constraints
- Environmental pressures, e.g. extreme events
- Sovereignty concerns
- Please list other challenges and/or provide further details: [fill in]

2. What have been the main achievements in-cooperating on transboundary waters?

- Improved water management
- Enhanced regional integration, i.e. beyond water
- Adoption of cooperative arrangements
- Adoption of joint plans and programmes
- Long-lasting and sustained cooperation
- Financial support for joint activities
- Stronger political will for transboundary water cooperation
- Better knowledge and understanding
- Dispute avoidance
- Stakeholder engagement

Please list other achievements, keys to achieving success, and/or provide concrete examples: [fill in]

3. Please indicate which institutions were consulted during the completion of the questionnaire

- Joint body or mechanism
- Other riparian or aquifer countries
- National water management authority
- Environment agency/ authority
- Basin authority (national)
- Local or provincial government
- Geological survey (national)
- Non-water specific ministries, e.g. foreign affairs, finance, forestry and energy
- Civil society organizations
- Water user associations
- Private sector

Other (please list): [fill in]

Please briefly describe the process by which the questionnaire was completed: [fill in]

4. If you have any other comments please add them here (*insert comments*): [fill in]5. Name and contact details of the person(s) who filled out the questionnaire (*please insert*): [fill in]

Date: [fill in] Signature: [fill in]

Thank you very much for taking the time to complete this report.

Decision VIII/2 Designation and responsibilities of focal points

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

Stressing the key role of focal points in promoting and implementing the Convention, as also outlined in the strategy for the implementation of the Convention at the global level (ECE/MP.WAT/54/Add.2),

Recognizing the need to define the role and responsibilities of focal points and to ensure their official designation,

1. *Requests* Parties to officially designate one or more national focal points for the Convention by 31 January 2019, or within three months from becoming a Party, through an official communication to the secretariat;
2. *Encourages* non-Parties to also officially designate one or more national focal points for the Convention by 31 January 2019 through an official communication to the secretariat;
3. *Requests* Parties and non-Parties that have nominated more than one focal point to provide details of the different competencies of their focal points;
4. *Also requests* Parties and non-Parties to inform the secretariat without delay about any change regarding the designated focal points;
5. *Requests* the secretariat to maintain a directory of contact details of national focal points on the Convention's website to facilitate the sharing of information;
6. *Agrees* that the main responsibilities of focal points are to:
 - (a) Actively promote the objectives and implementation of the Convention, its tools and its programme of work;
 - (b) Serve as a channel for all communications with the secretariat and other countries on Convention-related matters;
 - (c) Receive notifications of meetings, activities and other information related to the Convention and disseminate such information to other relevant national authorities, organizations and the general public, as appropriate;
 - (d) Facilitate regular and active involvement in the activities under the Convention, including by ensuring the coordination of relevant national institutions and the nomination of national experts and delegates for workshops and intergovernmental meetings under the Convention;
 - (e) Ensure, through the appropriate consultative process, the preparation and submission of national reports under the Convention, and facilitate the preparation and submission of national reports on Sustainable Development Goal global indicator 6.5.2 on transboundary water cooperation;
 - (f) Follow up on secretariat requests, including requests for information and inputs based on decisions by the Meeting of the Parties or the Convention's subsidiary bodies;
 - (g) Disseminate information on the implementation of the Convention and other relevant national developments in the framework of the Convention's meetings and those of other relevant national and international forums;
 - (h) Facilitate possible voluntary contributions to the Convention's trust fund;

(i) Respond to information requests from the public on matters related to the Convention, as appropriate;

(j) Carry out any other relevant task to support implementation of the Convention or as decided by the Meeting of the Parties;

7. *Calls on* Parties and non-Parties involved in the Convention's activities to make appropriate internal arrangements so that the nominated focal points can perform the required tasks;

8. *Requests* the Working Group on Integrated Water Resources Management to regularly organize sessions where focal points are invited to report on their efforts to promote the Convention and exchange experiences and lessons learned.

Decision VIII/3 General issues of implementation

The Meeting of the Parties,

Having regard to its decision VI/1 on support to implementation and compliance (see ECE/MP.WAT/37/Add.2),

Taking note of the report of the Implementation Committee to the Meeting of the Parties at its eighth session (ECE/MP.WAT/2018/8) and endorsing its findings,

Welcoming the way in which the Committee has been working and the progress made in establishing working procedures and in promoting the mechanism to support implementation and compliance,

Expressing its appreciation for the suggested revision of the reporting template and for the Implementation Committee's analysis of the reports submitted by the Parties during the pilot reporting exercise,

1. *Reiterates* that Parties are under a good faith obligation to cooperate with the Committee's information-gathering procedures;
2. *Recalls* that transboundary cooperation is a key principle of the Convention, as it supports the achievement of the Convention's object and purpose;
3. *Recognizes*, at the same time, that cooperation per se is not the only objective of the Convention and that the principles of reasonable and equitable use and of prevention, control and reduction of transboundary impact are no less important;
4. *Welcomes* the interaction between the Implementation Committee and non-governmental actors in relation to information gathering;
5. *Welcomes* the exchanges of experiences between the Implementation Committee and other relevant bodies that facilitate and support implementation of and compliance with other agreements, particularly the Protocol on Water and Health;
6. *Welcomes* the contribution of the Implementation Committee and its members to support interpretation and application of the principles of the Convention also amongst non-Parties;
7. *Stresses* the importance of the reporting mechanism for effective fulfilment of the Implementation Committee's mandate;
8. *Express its appreciation* for the general progress achieved by the Parties in implementing the Convention as reflected in the pilot reporting exercise;
9. *Notes with concern* that certain common challenges to implementation and compliance remain and that some Parties appear to face specific challenges in implementation and compliance;
10. *Encourages* Parties and other stakeholders to seek the Committee's assistance, support and facilitation to address difficulties in implementing and complying with the Convention, so as to ensure that the object and purpose of the Convention are advanced and to prevent water-related disputes.