

Water Convention Bulletin

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Summary of the Ninth Meeting of the Parties to the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes (Water Convention)

In a world slowly emerging from the COVID-19 pandemic, the ninth session of the Meeting of the Parties (MOP9) to the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes (Water Convention), held in a hybrid format, successfully highlighted the importance of transboundary water cooperation and the significance of water as a catalyst for cooperation, bringing forth peace and enabling sustainable development.

Highlights of MOP9 include:

- The high-level special session on water and peace, revealing increased political attention on water-related issues and highlighting the role of transboundary water cooperation in building trust, stability, and peace. The session provided a high-level platform for open dialogue on the role of water in sustainable development, regional integration, and peace in transboundary basins and beyond;
- The expansion of the Water Convention with Ghana, Guinea-Bissau, and Togo recently acceding to the Convention, and being welcomed as new Parties;
- The depiction of regional water cooperation in practice and demonstration of the supportive role of the Water Convention, including via the signing of the Ministerial Declaration on the Senegalo-Mauritanian Aquifer Basin (SMAB) by ministers from The Gambia, Guinea-Bissau, Mauritania, and Senegal, which paves the way for sustainable management of regional water resources, ensuring water security and stability;
- The adoption of the Programme of Work 2022-2024, which includes seven thematic areas aimed at supporting countries and basins worldwide in enhancing cooperation, from adaptation to climate change to the application of the water-food-energy-ecosystems nexus approach;
- Review of the current partnerships for implementing the Water Convention and strong commitments to cooperation expressed by several new partners;
- Adoption of two innovative guidance documents on the development of agreements for transboundary water cooperation and on water allocation in a transboundary context; and
- Launch of three new publications on: funding and financing of transboundary water cooperation; solutions and investments in the water-food-energy-ecosystems nexus; and the second report on implementation of the Water Convention.

The practical guide on the development of agreements aims to help riparian countries design and negotiate transboundary water agreements and arrangements. The guide contains important information on building blocks for transboundary agreements and examples from treaty practice. The handbook on water allocation is a tool to assist countries to address one of the biggest challenges in transboundary water cooperation.

The publication “Funding and financing of transboundary water cooperation and basin development” notes that: domestic budgetary resources should be the main funding source; it also addresses private funding and financing and innovative financial instruments. The report on solutions and investments in the water-food-energy-ecosystems nexus notes that private funding can have a major role to play in upscaling nexus solutions in transboundary basins, stressing the need for: institutional arrangements conducive to cross-sectoral cooperation; political

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will; and mutual trust. The second report on implementation of the Water Convention reveals several positive achievements, including progress in the conclusion of regional and bilateral transboundary water agreements and establishment of joint institutions among Parties.

Other important items under discussion included progress in national processes towards accession, with several African countries, including Uganda, Tanzania, Namibia, Côte d'Ivoire, The Gambia, Nigeria, Republic of Congo, and Burkina Faso expressing interest in acceding to the Convention. Iraq expressed hope to soon become the first country in the Middle East to accede to the Convention.

Participants shared experiences in implementing the Convention on the ground in different regions of the world through projects and capacity building. They further addressed the European Union Water Initiative (EUWI) National Policy Dialogues on integrated water resources management (IWRM), with many countries from Eastern Europe, Caucasus, and Central Asia, presenting the dialogues' results and offering valuable insights.

Delegates addressed reporting on Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 6 (Clean water and sanitation) indicator 6.5.2 (proportion of transboundary basin area with an operational arrangement for water cooperation), lauding progress and identifying key areas for further improvement. They also discussed ways to mainstream water and the benefits of transboundary cooperation into national climate policies; reviewed the activities of the Joint Expert Group on Water and Industrial Accidents; and deliberated on the Convention's provisions on joint monitoring and assessment. Kazakhstan handed over the presidency of the Convention to Estonia for the next triennium.

Organized by the UN Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) in cooperation with the Government of Estonia, MOP9 took place from 29 September - 1 October in a hybrid format in Geneva, Switzerland, and virtually. More than 500 representatives from governments, international, governmental and non-governmental organizations, and academia attended the meeting. Despite the challenges, MOP9 was deemed highly successful. Its deliberations are expected to significantly strengthen national and regional efforts for the protection and sound management of transboundary surface water and groundwater.

A Brief History of the Water Convention

The Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes (Water Convention) was adopted in Helsinki, Finland, on 17 March 1992 and entered into force in 1996. The Convention was amended in 2003 to allow accession by all UN Member States. On 8 November 2012, the necessary number of ratifications for the amendments on the opening of the Convention to all UN Member States to enter into force was reached, and the amendments entered into force in February 2013. Countries beyond the UN Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) region have been able to join the Water Convention since March 2016 when all Parties had ratified the amendment. 44 countries and the EU are Parties to the Water Convention as of 29 September 2021, with Chad, Senegal, Ghana, and Guinea-Bissau being the first outside the UNECE region. Accession of Togo, which will enter into force

on the ninetieth day after the date of deposit of its instrument of accession (28 September 2021) will bring the number of Parties to 46.

The Water Convention's objective is to strengthen national measures for the protection and sound management of transboundary surface and groundwater and to promote transboundary water cooperation. Under the Convention, Parties are required, *inter alia*, to: prevent, control, and reduce transboundary impacts; use transboundary waters reasonably and equitably; and manage them sustainably. Parties should develop agreement and set up joint bodies for their transboundary basins. The Convention also includes provisions on monitoring, research and development, consultations, warning systems, mutual assistance, and access to information by the public.

There are two protocols to the Convention. The UNECE/World Health Organization (WHO)-Europe Protocol on Water and Health was adopted in London, the United Kingdom, in 1999 and entered into force in 2005. There are 36 signatories and currently 27 Parties to the Protocol. The Protocol aims to protect human health and wellbeing through improved water management, including the protection of water ecosystems, and by preventing, controlling, and reducing water-related diseases. The Protocol on Civil Liability and Compensation for Damage Caused by the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents on Transboundary Waters to the Water Convention and to the 1992 Convention on the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents (Industrial Accident Convention), was signed in Kiev, Ukraine in 2003, at the Fifth "Environment for Europe" Ministerial Conference as a response to the Baia Mare cyanide spill in Romania. It has been signed by 24 countries, ratified by one country, and has not yet entered into force. The Civil Liability Protocol provides for a comprehensive regime for civil liability and compensation for damage resulting from the transboundary effects of industrial accidents on transboundary waters. The 1997 Convention on the Non-Navigational Uses of International Watercourses (Watercourses Convention, not serviced by UNECE) entered into force on 17 August 2014 and has 37 Parties.

MOP3: The third session of the MOP was held in Madrid, Spain, from 26–28 November 2003. At this meeting, Parties decided, *inter alia*, to enabling acceding to the Convention by countries outside the UNECE region and to focus further work under the Convention on Eastern Europe, the Caucasus, and Central Asia, where many rivers and lakes that were a national concern within the Soviet Union are now shared between sovereign states.

MOP4: The fourth session of the MOP was held from 20–22 November 2006, in Bonn, Germany. At this meeting, decisions included the adoption of the: Strategies for Monitoring and Assessment of Transboundary Rivers, Lakes, and Groundwaters; Model Provisions on Transboundary Flood Management; Safety Guidelines and Good Practices for Pipelines, jointly with the Parties to the Industrial Accidents Convention; and the Recommendations on the Payments for Ecosystem Services in IWRM.

MOP5: The fifth session of the MOP took place from 10–12 November 2009 in Geneva, Switzerland. MOP5, *inter alia*: adopted the Guide to Implementing the Convention and the Guidance on Water and Adaptation to Climate Change; mandated the Legal Board of the Convention to explore options for a

mechanism to support implementation and compliance in view of considering proposals for such mechanism at MOP6; decided on the continuation of the National Policy Dialogues (NPDs) under the European Union Water Initiative (EUWI); and agreed on a roadmap to develop the Second Assessment of Transboundary Rivers, Lakes, and Groundwaters in the UNECE region, to be issued by the Seventh “Environment for Europe” Ministerial Conference.

MOP6: The sixth session of the MOP took place from 28–30 November 2012 in Rome, Italy. MOP6 adopted decisions on, *inter alia*: support for implementation and compliance, establishing an Implementation Committee; Model Provisions on Transboundary Groundwaters; accession by countries beyond the UNECE region; cooperation with the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and the UN Economic, Social, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO); and a vision for the future of the Convention.

MOP7: The seventh session of the MOP took place from 17-19 November 2015 in Budapest, Hungary. The meeting marked the global opening of the Water Convention to countries beyond the UNECE region. MOP7 addressed many substantive issues, including: support for implementation and compliance; adoption of a reporting mechanism; climate change adaptation in transboundary basins; benefits of transboundary water cooperation; contingency planning for industrial accidents; and thematic assessment of the water-food-energy-ecosystems nexus in transboundary waters, among other matters.

MOP8: The eighth session of the MOP took place from 10-12 October 2018 in Nur-Sultan, Kazakhstan. The Convention welcomed Chad and Senegal as the first countries from outside the Pan-European region to accede. Parties adopted a strategy for implementation of the Convention at the global level and addressed many substantive issues, including reporting under the Convention and SDG indicator 6.5.2 (proportion of transboundary basin area with an operational arrangement for water cooperation). Other substantive issues included support for implementation and compliance, climate change adaptation in transboundary basins, and a methodology for assessing the water-food-energy-ecosystems nexus. The meeting adopted the programme of work for 2019-2021. MOP8 was preceded by a high-level workshop, “Financing Transboundary Basin Development,” where participants discussed different financing sources for transboundary cooperation and ways to match these sources to financing needs.

Water Convention MOP9 Report

MOP9 Opening Plenary

Chair Zhanar Aitzhanova, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary, Permanent Representative to UNOG, Kazakhstan, opened MOP9 on behalf of Kazakhstan as Chair of the MOP, highlighting that transboundary water cooperation is crucial for peace and sustainable development.

Sonja Koeppel, Secretary of the Water Convention, UNECE, welcomed participants, both online and in-person, and briefed them on COVID-19 related rules.

Kersti Kaljulaid, President of the Republic of Estonia, in her video address, highlighted that water basin management requires good communication and data sharing to decrease vulnerability to environmental changes. She referred to the Data for the

Environment Alliance (DEAL) as a mechanism to improve cooperation on environmental data and help develop a global environmental data strategy.

António Guterres, UN Secretary-General, in his address read by Olga Algayerova, UNECE Executive Secretary and UN Under-Secretary-General, lamented that progress towards meeting SDG 6 is off-track. He stressed the role of the Water Convention as a powerful tool to advance cooperation, prevent conflicts, and build resilience, and called for greater commitment, courage, and solidarity to move transboundary water cooperation forward.

Serikkali Brekeshev, Minister of Ecology, Geology, and Natural Resources, Kazakhstan, underscored that the proper management of water resources is a key factor to achieve economic growth and social wellbeing, and outlined regional efforts for close collaboration regarding water resources. He highlighted MOP8 outcomes, held in Nur Sultan, Kazakhstan, in 2018, focusing on implementation. He underscored pandemic-related challenges, urging for increased mutual understanding to overcome the problems.

Tõnis Mölder, Minister of the Environment, Estonia, stressed that “we only realize the value of water when problems start,” adding while water is a precondition for development, it is simultaneously a potential driver of conflict. He noted transboundary water cooperation on climate change adaptation not only prevents negative impacts, but can also make adaptation more effective and efficient. He expressed appreciation for the role of the Water Convention in promoting SDG implementation, conflict prevention, peace, and regional integration. He underscored the need for: accessible, reliable, and comparable data, and for harmonizing monitoring and assessment methodologies. He drew attention to SDG indicator 6.5.2 on transboundary water cooperation, highlighting progress and suggesting further use of digital solutions to increase efficiency.

Algayerova stressed that, despite COVID-19- related challenges, work under the Water Convention was successfully conducted via virtual meetings, webinars, and workshops. Emphasizing that transboundary water cooperation is vital for peace, sustainable development, and human well-being, she noted that water resources are under threat and suffering from increased competition over shared water resources. She underscored transboundary waters as a global public good, requiring effective governance. Further, she highlighted benefits



Chair Zhanar Aitzhanova, Kazakhstan

of the global opening of the Convention, welcomed new Parties, and drew attention to expected outcomes of MOP9, including the Programme of Work (POW) 2022-2024, the handbook on water allocation in a transboundary context, and the work on financing transboundary water cooperation.

MOP9 Chair Aitzhanova presented the meeting's agenda (ECE/MP.WAT/62), and Parties adopted it without comments. Aitzhanova drew attention to document ECE/MP.WAT/2021/1, which addresses procedural matters, allowing for both in person and online participation, including decision making. MOP9 took note of the document and decided to apply it throughout MOP9.

High-level Special Session on Water and Peace

The high-level special session on "Water and Peace" provided an opportunity to discuss the role of transboundary water cooperation in fostering trust, stability, and peace. It offered a high-level platform for an open dialogue on the role of water in sustainable development, regional integration, cooperation, and peace in transboundary basins and beyond. The session reflected on how accession to the Water Convention and its implementation can contribute to peace, and how to accelerate progress to tackle persisting challenges in transboundary water cooperation.

Danilo Türk, Chair of the Global High-Level Panel on Water and Peace, and former President of Slovenia, moderated three high-level panel discussions. He noted that, while questions of peace and armed conflict are complex, and include historical and social legacies that can make cohabitation difficult, water cooperation can be an important stabilizing factor.

Transboundary water cooperation as a key for regional peace and stability: Pekka Haavisto, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Finland, drew attention to Finland's commitment to transboundary water diplomacy and shared his experience as an envoy addressing the issues around the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam and the Nile Basin. He said the Water Convention principles had been used to address the issues around the dam and called for the UN to play a stronger role in water cooperation issues.

Jüri Ratas, President of the Parliament, Estonia, cited differing legal and institutional frameworks as challenging aspects to reaching agreements on transboundary water cooperation. Benefits to transboundary water cooperation, he said, include up-to-date monitoring information, decreased pollution, and promotion of peace and stability in the region. He suggested



Serigne Mbaye Thiam, Minister of Water and Sanitation, Senegal

organizing an event for parliamentarians on the Convention and transboundary water cooperation.

Serigne Mbaye Thiam, Minister of Water and Sanitation, Senegal, provided an overview of the transboundary water cooperation arrangements in his country, underscoring their importance as a source of peace, security, and development. He noted sustainable development in transboundary basins is an important aspect, as these shared waters either have or plan to have hydro-electric dams, enabling economic activity in all the countries concerned.

Mahdi Rashid Al-Hamdani, Minister of Water Resources, Iraq, confirmed his country's intention to accede to the Water Convention and lamented water insecurity in the region, which negatively impacts peace and security. He explained that transboundary cooperation must be based on a legal and institutional framework, and noted the role the Water Convention can play in this respect.

Abderahim Bireme Hamid, Executive Secretary, Niger Basin Authority (NBA), said the NBA uses a multisectoral approach to improve peace and security, including promoting tools to better manage water resources of the Niger river, and developing plans to share and communicate climate data. He lauded the Water Convention, stating that all NBA members intend to accede to it.

Following the keynote speeches, moderator Türk invited additional interventions.

Anita Pipan, Permanent Representative to the UN Office in Geneva (UNOG), Slovenia, on behalf of the EU, stressed "water is the essence of life and a key limiting factor, both a trigger of conflict and an enabler of peace." Noting that water competition is exacerbated where no cooperative legal frameworks exist, she drew attention to the Water Convention's globalization and to the EU's efforts to encourage transboundary, integrated water management, enhancing resilience, and providing a tool for peace and stability.

Honoré Sayi, Minister of Energy and Hydraulics, Republic of Congo, focused on national efforts to promote integrated management of transboundary waters in the spirit of the Water Convention. He noted his country's interest in acceding to the Convention, and described steps towards accession, including focal point designation.

Adamou Mahaman, Minister of Hydraulics and Sanitation, Niger, highlighted work under the Niger Basin Authority and the Lake Chad Basin Commission, stressing their role in promoting



Mahdi Rashid Al-Hamdani, Minister of Water Resources, Iraq



Cecilia Abena Dapaah, Minister of Sanitation and Water Resources, Ghana

regional cooperation and preserving peace and security. He underscored bilateral agreements on transboundary water resources with Mali, Nigeria, and Algeria, and called for building institutional arrangements and capacities across the African continent.

Calle Schlettwein, Minister of Agriculture, Water, and Land Reform, Namibia, highlighted his country's long record of transboundary water cooperation for the fair, sustainable, and integrated utilization and management of freshwater resources. He expressed his country's intention to accede to the Water Convention, noting that Namibia, as a downstream country on most of its shared watercourses, relies on cooperation.

Alice Ojowu, Water Resources, Planning, and Technical Support Services, Nigeria, on behalf of Suleiman H. Adamu, Minister of Water Resources, Nigeria, noted that transboundary water cooperation to ensure environmental sustainability, economic growth, and conflict prevention requires adequate legal and institutional frameworks, which the Water Convention provides. Emphasizing the country's commitment to acceding to the Convention, she highlighted cooperation in rivers Niger and Benue, and Lake Chad.

Tawfeeq Al-Sharjabi, Minister of Water and Environment, Yemen, underscored the importance of water for the Middle East region. He noted that 8,000 water resource points are in danger in Yemen and a large part of the related infrastructure destroyed, due to militias attacks by rebels. Stressing that civilians, including women, girls, and children are often the main victims of this conflict, he called for an integrated approach and cooperation among all stakeholders.

Mazen Ghunaim, Minister, Head of Palestinian Water Authority, State of Palestine, highlighted the water-related challenges in the Arab region, noting that the vast majority of people live in poverty and under water stress. He stated 85% of water resources in Palestine are out of Palestinian control, allowing no access to the Jordan River or the Dead Sea. He called for reconsidering membership conditions so Palestine could become a Party to the Water Convention.

Hristina Odjaklieska, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning, North Macedonia, noted that accession in 2015 was an important step towards strengthening transboundary water cooperation, protecting water resources, and ensuring equitable use. She highlighted information exchange, and the establishment of joint committees and expert working

groups to coordinate and report on transboundary activities, which have impacts on neighboring countries.

Ahmed Ihab Abdelahad Gamaleldin, Permanent Representative to UNOG, Egypt, noted that effective transboundary cooperation, while a precondition for the prevention of conflict, requires commitment to genuine good faith negotiations. He stressed that more efforts are needed to address the current fragmented approach, suggesting the conference on the mid-term review of the Water Action Decade, to be held in 2023, presents an opportunity to pursue a more coordinated approach.

The role of the Water Convention in fostering peace:

Cecilia Abena Dapaah, Minister of Sanitation and Water Resources, Ghana, emphasized that water can be a catalyst for cooperation, thereby fostering trust and peace. She underscored the role of the Convention as a vital instrument for managing transboundary water resources and described the efforts of her country to implement the Convention through a dedicated national implementation plan. She noted that Ghana's accession process sends signals regarding enhancing trust and good governance. On challenges, she stressed the need to balance competing interests in the management of transboundary water systems.

Shavkat Khamraev, Minister of Water Resources, Uzbekistan, highlighted the Convention's role in preventing conflicts in Central Asia, noting the Interstate Commission for Water Coordination established by five countries in the region, yielding positive results. Calling for further consolidation of efforts, he emphasized that if all the Aral Sea countries work together, sustainable solutions could be found.

Florika Fink-Hooijer, Director-General, DG Environment, European Commission, noted competition for the use and control of water resources can contribute to conflict, adding that extreme weather events and pollution has put more pressure on water resources. Citing the EU's experience and political and legal expertise in managing transboundary water resources, she said the EU would continue to support cooperation and promote the operationalization of the Convention on the ground. She emphasized that EU water diplomacy makes links between water, security, and peace, noting that the EU will continue to support the global expansion of the Convention's membership.

Dario Soto-Abril, Executive Secretary, Global Water Partnership (GWP), emphasized transboundary cooperation as a core part of his organization's work. He highlighted climate change, lack of proper governance mechanisms and lack of willingness to cooperate as challenges, and advocated bringing stakeholders together, co-financing, and the implementation of joint projects. Emphasizing the need for enhancing dialogue between boundaries and sectors, he called for more investments in human and natural capital and the implementation of a water-food-energy-ecosystems nexus approach.

Attila Tanzi, Chair, Implementation Committee of the Water Convention, noted the Committee's aim is to steer Parties towards cooperative implementation of the Convention. He noted the Committee's conflict prevention mandate is epitomized by its advisory procedure, adding Parties can request advice on implementation and the application of the Convention.

Moderator Türk invited additional interventions.

Ibrahim Alio Aboudlaye, Minister of Urban and Rural Hydraulics, Chad, said it is part of many transboundary aquifer

and watercourse bodies. He noted these agreements have allowed cooperation based on equitable resource sharing, which encourages cooperation that promotes peace and sustainable development. He reaffirmed Chad's commitment to maintaining the peaceful and sustainable use of water resources.

Alain-Richard Ahipaud Donwahi, Minister of Water and Forests, Côte d'Ivoire, said the Water Convention will encourage peace by promoting transboundary water management, recognizing that transboundary water basins can promote sustainable development, peace and security. He also stated transboundary water management bodies must promote sustainable development and reduce pollution.

Emmanuelle Lachaussee, Deputy Permanent Representative to UNOG, France, on behalf of Jérôme Bonnafont, Permanent Representative to UNOG, France, stressed the importance of dialogue to improve transboundary water management. She stated the Water Convention can boost cooperation, and improve the governance and management of water resources in an equitable manner. She said regular communication and dialogue allows the Convention to foster trust and stability. Closing, she noted water cooperation is often seen as technical, but political will is critical to manage water resources properly.

Aleksandar Stijović, Minister of Agriculture, Forestry, and Water Management, Montenegro, stressed the need to focus on regional and international cooperation regarding preventing, controlling, and reducing water pollution. Emphasizing that borders are points of connection, he called for waste-water treatment to reduce water pollution.

Barbara Visser, Minister of Infrastructure and Water Management, the Netherlands, in a video message, emphasized that international cooperation is the only way forward to reach global goals and deliver on development, peace, and security. She noted transboundary cooperation is essential to build trust and mutual understanding, and constitutes the basis for economic development.

Péter Kovács, Head of the Department of River Basin Management and Water Protection, Ministry of Interior, Hungary, on behalf of Margit Szűcs, Permanent Representative to UNOG, Hungary, highlighted the Water Convention as an excellent tool to promote transboundary cooperation, cautioning this kind of cooperation can be politically sensitive and requires trust building.

Efforts to accelerate achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 6: Gilbert Hougbo, President, International

Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), Chair of UN-Water, underscored the Water Convention's critical role in strengthening transboundary water cooperation, protecting life, and promoting peace for all. He stated that only true international partnership and cooperation will allow sufficient action to meet SDG indicator 6.5.2. He called for transboundary cooperation on aquifers, and stated the 2023 UN Conference on the Water Action Decade will be a watershed moment for accountability for all in meeting SDG 6.

Olga Algayerova, UNECE Executive Secretary and UN Under-Secretary-General, spoke on the second progress report on SDG indicator 6.5.2, saying key take-aways include that only 24 out of 129 reporting countries achieved the target in 2020, and efforts will have to be quadrupled to meet the target in 2030. She noted improvement in the quality of data submitted, leading to an improved understanding in gaps and needs, and stated reporting obligations have triggered progress in cooperation in different locations.

Xing Qu, UNESCO Deputy-Director-General, urged recognizing the importance of shared groundwater resources, stating that knowledge on transboundary aquifers has stagnated whereas knowledge on transboundary lakes and rivers has advanced. He highlighted the December 2021 Conference on "Transboundary Aquifers: Challenges and the way forward" as key for generating new knowledge and tools.

David Choquenhanca Céspedes, Vice President of Bolivia, stressed the need to seek accurate information, consolidate the political struggle, and help the dispossessed. He underscored that change is taking place as humanity is reconfiguring emotions and desires as the "post-pandemic reality shakes humanity's pillars." He noted there is no silver bullet to solve environmental problems, urging for partnerships to defend Mother Earth. Céspedes added that to solve the environmental and water crises, we need to tackle the root causes and support the culture of life, recognizing the human right to water.

Peter Thomson, UN Secretary's General's Special Envoy for the Ocean, underscored that in times of great uncertainties, collaborative action is paramount to achieve the SDGs, which are interrelated. He highlighted water-related challenges, including plastic pollution and water discharges without proper treatment, and stressed the importance of protecting wetlands and mangroves. He concluded that the UN provides platforms to facilitate dialogue between freshwater and saltwater communities,



Danilo Türk, Chair of the Global High-Level Panel on Water and Peace, former President of the Republic of Slovenia



Olga Algayerova, Executive Secretary, UNECE

highlighting in that respect the UN Ocean Conference to be held in Lisbon, Portugal, in 2022.

Noting that the World Bank's portfolio includes 143 water projects, 30% of which involve international waters, Jennifer Sara, Global Director, Water Global Practice, World Bank, shared three relevant lessons: the need to build foundations that enable cooperation starting with national-level activities; promote dialogue on technical issues, including dam safety, biodiversity conservation, and climate change resilience; and advance and connect global knowledge and experiences by undertaking analytical work for improved transboundary cooperation, including for ground waters. Sara called for developing legal and institutional frameworks, promoting participatory planning, structuring bankable projects, and building partnerships.

Tatyana Bokova, Deputy Head, Federal Agency for Water Resources, Russian Federation, highlighted cooperative efforts with neighboring countries and expressed the commitment of her country to continue supporting the strengthening of the global status and international image of the Convention. She highlighted the Second High-Level International Conference on the International Decade for Action "Water for Sustainable Development, 2018-2028" which will be held 2022 in Tajikistan. Bokova cautioned against the politicization of international dialogue, which she said could lead the global community away from effective, concrete solutions.

Following keynote speeches, moderator Türk invited additional interventions.

Iuliana Cantaragiu, Minister of Environment, Republic of Moldova, outlined the challenges in the transboundary water management agreement for the Dniester River, such as the pumped storage power station in Ukraine. She emphasized the need for compensation mechanisms to mitigate negative effects.

Inês dos Santos Costa, Secretary of State for Environment, Portugal, said the Water Convention's most valuable contribution to peace and stability is increasing the number of Parties. She stated the Convention offers a practical framework for transboundary water management and urged Parties to advocate for others to accede to the Convention. She underscored the critical role of communication for knowledge and data exchange, enabling the development of strategic plans and dispute resolution.

Malgorzata Bogucka-Szymalska, Deputy Director, Department of Water Management and Inland Navigation, Ministry of Maritime Economy and Inland Navigation, Poland, on behalf of



Iuliana Cantaragiu, Minister of Environment, Republic of Moldova

Marek Gróbarczyk, Secretary of State, Ministry of Infrastructure, Poland, underscored challenges, including providing access to water and sanitation in rural areas. She said the increasingly difficult global challenges require close cooperation among stakeholders.

Georgios Amyras, Deputy Minister of Environment and Energy in charge of Environmental Protection, Ministry of Environment and Energy, Greece, highlighted the agreement between Greece, Albania, and North Macedonia for the management of Prespa Lake. He said Parties to the agreement renewed their commitment to seeking integrated solutions for improved livelihoods, which should be based on engagement with local actors and stakeholders.

Maryprisca Mahundi, Deputy Minister of Water, Tanzania, stated that transboundary water management is of ecological and economic importance, and can provide peace, security, and ecosystem integrity. She urged enhancing water diplomacy to build a bridge between science and policy, and said Tanzania will continue to be an agent of peace through taking part in transboundary water management.

Adrian Cosmin Vierita, Permanent Representative to the UNOG, Romania, stressed that sustainable management of water resources is one of the greatest global challenges of the 21st century with a strong impact on security and peace. Outlining bilateral cooperation between Romania and other countries in the region, he called for intensifying collaboration, and promoting good practices and membership to water-related conventions.

Martin Méndez Méndez, Vice Minister of Water, Ministry of the Environment and Natural Resources, Guatemala, noted national efforts to protect water resources based on transgenerational human development and sustainable development.

In his concluding remarks, Tõnis Mölder, Minister of the Environment, Estonia, noted that the high-level segment emphasized the important linkages among water, climate change, and peace. Emphasizing that transboundary waters are a global common good, he stressed that political will is needed now more than ever for efficient transboundary cooperation. Mölder further underscored the need to promote nature-based solutions and multi-sectoral strategies for the effective management of transboundary basins. He emphasized the important role of the Water Convention, celebrating its expansion and calling for further accessions and focus on implementation. He highlighted examples of successful transboundary cooperation, including the Ministerial Declaration on the SMAB. He concluded by underscoring the links between water and health, and noting that the Convention was able to continue its work despite the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Moderator Türk emphasized that political will is expressed by the variety of statements made during the high-level session from every part of the world and stressed the need to strengthen international water cooperation.

Signature of the declaration on the Senegalo-Mauritanian Aquifer Basin: The ministers of riparian countries of the SMAB namely The Gambia, Guinea-Bissau, Mauritania, and Senegal signed a joint ministerial declaration to advance transboundary cooperation in the SMAB. The declaration lays the foundations for the launch of a negotiation process to define the long term legal and institutional framework for cooperation. The process was facilitated by the Water Convention Secretariat, together



Francesca Bernardini, UNECE

with the Geneva Water Hub and the International Groundwater Resources Assessment Centre (IGRAC), and followed the request from Senegal made upon accession to the Water Convention in 2018.

Final Decision: Recognizing the importance of water cooperation for peace and stability, the MOP *inter alia*:

- emphasizes the important linkages between climate change, water and stability. As described by some countries, extreme events and growing scarcity can undermine sustainable development, drive instability and migration, especially in already fragile contexts. At the same time, transboundary water cooperation can support peace-building and regional integration;
- stresses transboundary waters as a global common good;
- recognizes the relevance of nature-based solutions, strengthening source-to-sea governance and adoption of multisectoral and multi-hazard disaster risk management strategies, improving water quality, enhancing water availability and reducing risks of water-related disasters and climate change;
- affirms that the Water Convention offers an essential intergovernmental platform and home in the UN system for dealing with transboundary water issues and welcomes numerous expressions of interest by new countries in acceding to the Water Convention;
- calls on all Member states to join both the 1992 Water Convention and the 1997 Watercourse Convention;
- also calls on international and regional organizations, especially from the UN system and specialized agencies, and financial institutions to support governments in accession and implementation;
- underlines the key role of joint bodies such as river basin organizations, to promote a regional approach to accession and implementation;
- acknowledges that the COVID-19 pandemic has significantly impacted transboundary water cooperation progress and reinforced the linkages between water and health; and
- praises the progress achieved in many transboundary basins despite the challenges posed by the pandemic.

Status of Ratification of the Convention and its Protocols and Report on Credentials: Progress in the Global Opening of the Convention

Francesca Bernardini, Chief of the transboundary cooperation section of UNECE and previous Secretary of the Water

Convention, shared her enthusiasm for being able to contribute once again on the issue of transboundary cooperation.

Sonja Koeppel presented on the status of ratifications of the Convention and its protocols (ECE/MP/WAT/2021/INF.2/Rev.1). She noted 44 countries and the EU are Parties to the Water Convention, pointing out that Togo deposited its instrument of accession on 28 September 2021. 43 countries and the EU have ratified or accepted the amendments in Articles 25 and 26 of the Water Convention, allowing countries outside the UNECE region to become Parties. Koeppel added that the 1999 Protocol on Water and Health has been signed by 36 countries and currently has 27 Parties; and the Protocol on Civil Liability and Compensation for Damage Caused by the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents on Transboundary Waters has been signed by 24 countries and has not yet entered into force. She concluded noting that the Watercourses Convention has 37 Parties.

On Friday, Lea Kauppi, Water Convention Bureau member, Finland, reported the credentials of all delegates were in order.

Statements by new Parties to the Water Convention:

Cecilia Abena Dapaah, Minister of Sanitation and Water Resources, Ghana, explained that the Volta Basin population is predominately rural and stated that frequent extreme weather events, reduced surface waters, and aquifer recharge are a serious concern. She noted Ghana has pursued practical solutions including strengthening relations with riparian neighbors and recognizes the need for international legal agreements to serve as vital tools to guide transboundary cooperation. She emphasized that becoming a Party is one key step towards achieving protection and sustainable use of shared water resources, encouraging other countries to join the Convention.

Orlando Mendes Viegas, Minister of State for Natural Resources and Energy, Guinea-Bissau, highlighted challenges facing his country, citing pressure on water systems, climate change, and high salination rates. He noted that accession to the Convention would strengthen national policy instruments and enhance transboundary cooperation, including the joint management of aquifers. Viegas looked forward to working closely with Senegal, Gambia, and Mauritania and urged other countries, particularly in the region, to finalize accession.

Final Decision: The MOP welcomes Ghana, Guinea-Bissau, and Togo as new Parties and calls upon donors, international financial institutions, international organizations, and other actors in transboundary water cooperation to support the implementation of the Convention in the new Parties.

Increasing Awareness of and Accession to the Convention and Application of its Principles Drawing on the Benefits of Cooperation

Chair Péter Kovács, Vice-Chair of the Bureau, Hungary, introduced relevant documents and outlined the way discussions will be structured under this agenda item.

Progress in national processes towards accession and implementation of the Strategy for the implementation of the Convention at the global level: Eugénie Avram, Bureau member, France, presented a review of activities undertaken in different regions as well as proposed activities. She noted that despite the disruption caused by COVID-19, there has been an acceleration of cooperation, with policy and technical assistance provided to several countries. She explained accession had been slower in North Africa and the Middle East due to political instability and the sensitive nature of transboundary

water resources, commending Iraq for progress in the accession procedure. On future priorities, she noted the need to: exchange experiences; continue awareness raising at the national level, and through regional organizations and basins; and accelerate implementation of the Convention at the global level.

Sibylle Vermont, Water Convention Bureau member, Switzerland, focused on the Review of the implementation of the Strategy for the Convention's implementation at the global level. She highlighted increasing: awareness and political support; accession; support for implementation; support for implementation of water-related SDGs through the Convention; and partners and synergies. On lessons learned, she explained that the Strategy is useful in guiding efforts, but progress has been uneven in terms of implementing action. She noted the need for strengthening partnerships, raising awareness with regional partners, further involving a wide range of stakeholders, and increasing links with academia.

UGANDA reported that accession efforts had been affected by COVID-19 but expressed hope to accede to the Convention soon. The ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR AFRICA emphasized that strong transboundary cooperation with basin countries is critical, noting, however, that the Convention cannot replace bilateral and multilateral agreements. The Commission pledged to provide support to the Secretariat to ensure that water is addressed in a cross-cutting manner, particularly ahead of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) COP 26, and highlighted efforts to assist Niger to accede to the Convention.

The ECONOMIC COMMUNITY OF WEST AFRICAN STATES (ECOWAS) highlighted action to support, promote, and implement the Water Convention among its member states. He noted that cooperation had contributed to development in the riparian states and is helping to prevent conflicts.

The EU highlighted the development of strong policies, including the European Green Deal, to reduce pollution to levels no longer considered harmful. She indicated that the EU would continue to support globalization activities, welcoming new Parties, and lauding non-parties for showing interest in the Convention. She underscored continued commitment to addressing water challenges globally through water diplomacy, highlighting the five-country biosphere reserve, which stretches across Austria, Slovenia, Croatia, Hungary, and Serbia, recently approved by UNESCO.

THE GAMBIA expressed interest in acceding to the Convention, and requested legal and technical support to fast track the accession process. BURKINA FASO reported on its accession progress, highlighting involvement of the National Water Council, an ad hoc inter-ministerial committee, as well as the development of a roadmap.

NIGERIA reported on the accession process with the appointment of two focal points and the sensitization of relevant ministries and stakeholders on the benefits of accession. She further noted the development of a roadmap and the intention to convene a national workshop, and requested financial and technical support from the Convention to enable accession.

IRAQ observed that accession would leverage its negotiating position with other riparian states on shared water resources. He explained the accession procedure had yet to be completed, expressing hope of being the first country in the Middle East to accede to the Convention.

LUXEMBOURG welcomed work to bring new countries onboard, noting the Convention's Strategy would motivate others to join. He called for online tools, showcasing specific actions and progress achieved.

The ORGANIZATION FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE SENEGAL RIVER highlighted the World Water Forum due to convene in 2022, in Senegal, as an opportunity for mobilization, undertaking to encourage members to accede to the Convention.

BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA explained that, with financial and technical support from the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA), the country was in the process of drafting an environmental protection action plan, and that a Green Agenda for the Western Balkans was being implemented, emphasizing synergies with sectors and countries as a key factor for success.

IRAN highlighted a 1975 transboundary water agreement with Iraq, and said the country stands ready to discuss cooperation and other issues related to shared water basins in the context of the agreement.

SPAIN encouraged other countries to adhere to the Convention and said MOP9 will be able to provide several examples of successful transboundary water agreements. She urged sharing work, knowledge, and experiences.

THE NETHERLANDS reiterated cooperation on natural and water resources is essential for peace and security. He said the Netherlands has tabled climate and water as root causes of instability and conflict at the UN Security Council. He further highlighted the water, peace, and security partnership to develop innovative tools to help identify and address water-related security risks.

Final Decision: The MOP:

- welcomes significant progress on accession in Côte d'Ivoire and Iraq, and urges these countries to finalize their accession processes;
- also welcomes the progress towards accession by many countries from different regions and encourages them to complete accession processes as soon as possible;
- welcomes progress made with the implementation of the Strategy for the implementation of the Convention at the global level and calls on Parties, and others to further advance its implementation;
- welcomes the publication FAQs on the 1992 Water Convention, the Road map to facilitate accession processes and encourages countries, joint bodies, partner organizations, and others to use it to inform the processes on accession; and
- decides to include "Increasing capacity for implementation of the Convention and supporting national processes towards accession in the POW 2022-2024.

Launch of the second progress report on implementation of the Convention: Iulia Trombitaia, UNECE, introduced the second report on the implementation of the Water Convention (ECE/MP.WAT/67). She noted all Parties had submitted national reports. She said the report shows several positive achievements, including an average value of 80% for SDG indicator 6.5.2 with the global average value regarding reporting for indicator 6.5.2 being just 58%. She highlighted the Convention's POW addresses many areas where implementation support is needed, including on monitoring, climate change, and financing transboundary cooperation.

GERMANY expressed concern regarding the lack of resources, said recommendations in the report are key to next steps, and cited the Water Convention reporting mechanism as a good model for other sectors.

POLAND stated the primary obstacle to properly estimating SDG indicator 6.5.2 at the national level is a lack of data and information. She said being able to compare national results against the international achievements provides points to where future work is needed.

ROMANIA said the report is key to showcasing progress and demonstrating what steps have been taken to achieve SDG indicator 6.5.2. SWITZERLAND lauded the report for stimulating work to fill gaps in knowledge, stating it has shown how important groundwaters are, calling for additional work.

AZERBAIJAN highlighted cooperation, justice, joint monitoring, and information exchange, noting cooperation on transboundary rivers with Armenia, which is not a Party to the Convention, remains problematic.

Final Decision: The MOP welcomes the report “Progress on transboundary water cooperation under the Water Convention: Second report on implementation of the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes 2017-2020” and encourages its use in support of transboundary water cooperation.

Supporting the development of agreements and the establishment of joint bodies: Chair Harry Liiv, Water Convention Bureau Vice-Chair, Estonia, introduced the agenda item, launching the publication “Practical guide on the development of agreements or other arrangements for transboundary water cooperation” (ECE/MP.WAT/68), noting that developing transboundary agreements is one of the major challenges in transboundary cooperation.

Péter Kovács, Chair of the Expert Group, Hungary, described the steps of the Practical Guide’s development, the role and work modalities of the drafting group, and future activities. He described the content of the guide and stressed the practical guide aims to help countries draft, design, and negotiate agreements, focusing on the drafting options, rather than the process. He highlighted future work, including the development of the Practical Guide as an online toolkit and the convening of regional or basin workshops to disseminate the guide and support developing agreements.

Owen McIntyre, University College Cork, Ireland, emphasized that the Practical Guide provides a resource supporting the development of new treaties and agreements, containing

important guidelines, procedures, and technical rules. He noted that key decision makers are not always familiar with established treaty practice in relation to shared water resources, leading to uncertainty regarding the normative implications of key provisions. He stressed the Practical Guide offers an authoritative compilation of existing treaty practices, going beyond key existing instruments, while being respectful of sovereign discretion.

The EU said that the publication investigates key questions and compiles a wealth of existing knowledge and experience. Underscoring the guide’s usefulness in drafting or amending agreements and establishing new bodies, she noted that the content is tailored to specific circumstances and encouraged all to disseminate it, and also develop an online toolkit.

The GENEVA WATER HUB underscored the importance of developing legal frameworks to strengthen transboundary cooperation on water resources as reflected in Article 9 of the Convention (bilateral and multilateral cooperation). She stressed the Practical Guide facilitates the adoption of agreements in line with international law, considering qualitative and quantitative aspects of water.

LUXEMBOURG welcomed the publication and the concrete examples it contains, stating these can inspire other conventions. He stressed that the Practical Guide will support countries in designing new agreements and facilitate the revision of existing agreements, noting the need for appropriate dispute resolution mechanisms.

An expert from Paraguay reflected on the water-related stresses in Latin America, saying the countries in the region are aware of the value of cooperation, citing, as an example, the joint use of the Parana River by Paraguay, Brazil, and Argentina. She concluded that the Practical Guide will facilitate cooperation among countries sharing transboundary water resources and agreements tailored to particular needs.

FRANCE noted that the Practical Guide offers a valuable tool and is already used in France’s cooperation project with Switzerland on the Rhône River.

The GWP noted that the Practical Guide’s content is most useful for developing agreements, highlighting regional dialogues to develop regional guidelines for transboundary water resources. She noted that the GWP will be using the Practical Guide in its training sessions.

UZBEKISTAN emphasized that the political climate in Central Asia creates favorable conditions to improve overall regional collaboration, including transboundary water cooperation. Reflecting on regional institutional mechanisms, including for the preservation of the Aral Sea, he noted that cooperation will be enhanced via the use of technical and negotiating instruments found in the Practical Guide.

SWITZERLAND stressed that while its bilateral cooperation with France is longstanding, it can further be improved upon, taking into account lessons learned.

Final Decision: The MOP adopts the Practical Guide on the development of agreements or other arrangements for transboundary water cooperation and calls on countries, basins, and partners to use it in their efforts to develop or revise transboundary water agreements or other arrangements and to strengthen implementation of the Convention.

Implementation Committee: Attila Tanzi, Implementation Committee Chair, Italy, presented the report of the Committee



Chair Harry Liiv, Estonia, with Sonja Koeppel, Secretary of the Water Convention

(ECE/MP.WAT/2021/5), saying a highlight of the last triennium was a request from Montenegro for assistance on the possible transboundary impact of additional small hydropower plants on the Cijevna/Cem River in Albania. The Committee then started an advisory procedure with the two countries. The outcomes included recommendations on establishing a joint technical working group on monitoring and assessment; and developing an information exchange protocol. On the core rules of procedure for the implementation committee, Tanzi stated that the Committee felt they were sufficient, and no changes were needed.

MONTENEGRO welcomed the transparent way the Committee conducted the advisory procedure, and suggested the outcome is an example other transboundary agreements could follow. ALBANIA underscored they will organize the first meeting of the joint technical working group. The EU cited the outcome of the advisory procedure as proof positive of its usefulness. He lauded the gender and geographical balance of the proposed candidates for the Committee and supported their election.

Final Decision: The MOP:

- takes note of the report on the work of the Implementation Committee in 2019-2021 (ECE/MP.WAT/2021/5) and notes the outcomes of the first advisory procedure; and
- encourages Parties and other stakeholders to seek the Committee's assistance, support, and facilitation to address difficulties in implementing and complying with the Convention.

Supporting implementation or application of the Convention through projects on the ground and capacity building: Presentations focused on key achievements over the past three years and lessons learned from cooperation. Mykhailo Khoriv, Ukraine, highlighted the treaty between Moldova and Ukraine on the Dniester Basin, noting that the Dniester Basin Commission is working independently and successfully, and both countries adhere to the objectives of the Convention. He cited challenges, including the establishment of sound environmental conditions, developing irrigation, and ensuring drinking water supplies for consumers in both countries. He explained that this positive experience would be used to establish a commission to manage the Prut River basin shared by Ukraine, Romania, and Moldova.

Indira Akbozova, Kazakhstan, highlighted the Chu-Talas Basin, explaining that the relevant commission had been operational since 2006, and some positive results had been achieved including: co-financing; close cooperation with



Attila Tanzi, Chair, Implementation Committee of the Water Convention

international organizations; GEF support; the establishment of a working group on environmental protection; sampling of both rivers with support of the Organization for European Economic Co-operation; and the development of national action plans up to 2030. On lessons learned, she noted the need to take preventative measures to mitigate risks related to climate change, the need for less water intensive crops and for improvements in hydrological forecasting.

Shukhrat Talipov, Uzbekistan, discussed a dam safety project, focusing on the development of a regional cooperation strategy for the rational and effective use of water and energy resources for Central Asia. He explained that the dam safety project has resulted in the adoption of legislation on dam security and in light of recommendations, a number of measures have been implemented and dam safety training undertaken.

Ylber Mirta, North Macedonia, highlighted the Drin basin, noting the development of a Lake Ohrid management plan. On lessons, he reflected on cooperation with the International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River and the Sava River Water Commission, noting that a joint Drin commission would be established and a feasibility study for the management of the Drin basin has been developed.

Saule Ospanova, Office of the Coordinator of Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) Economic and Environmental Activities (OCEEA) highlighted activities contributing to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and SDG 6 in several river basins. She discussed long term engagement with Ukraine and Moldova on the establishment of the Dniester Basin Commission in cooperation with UNECE, as well as other activities implemented with UN partners, emphasizing the need to actively engage women in water management.

The WORLD METEOROLOGICAL ORGANIZATION highlighted long-standing partnerships in project development and capacity building, mainly on data and information. He described the establishment of a water and climate coalition to enable countries to be more resilient to climate impacts in the future, emphasizing this as an important aspect for the Water Convention.

Final Decision: The MOP recognizes the crucial importance of capacity building and assistance projects to support implementation of the Water Convention, and expresses appreciation for the progress achieved under different projects and for cooperation with partners.



Mykhailo Khoriv, Ukraine

Supporting Monitoring, Assessment, and Information Sharing in Transboundary Basins

Chair Liiv introduced the agenda item. Lea Kauppi, Finland, and Niokhor Ndour, Senegal, Co-Chairs of the Working Group on Monitoring and Assessment, presented implemented activities and future plans. Some of the information is included in the Report of the Working Group on its 15th meeting (ECE/MP.WAT/WG.2/2019/2).

Kauppi presented main achievements, highlighting the background paper “Outlook for developing monitoring cooperation and exchange of data and information across borders” (ECE/MP.WAT/WG.2/2019/INF.1), which describes the status of and future thoughts for monitoring and assessment in transboundary basins. She noted that strengthening the legal basis and frameworks for data exchange was recognized as a crucial measure. She described the development of monitoring cooperation in the Drin project and a set of preliminary study reports on the Senegalo-Mauritanian Aquifer. She emphasized developments during the last triennium, including convening a global workshop on data and information exchange in transboundary basins, strategic regional discussions, the meetings of the Working Group, and an expert meeting on monitoring, assessment, and data exchange. She concluded by highlighting lessons learned, including the need for sustainable financing of activities, and the need to strengthen sustainability of collecting, and exchanging data and information.

Ndour focused on future activities of the work programme on monitoring and evaluation. He highlighted: the publication of a summary collection of good practices; a publication on monitoring of watercourses, lakes, and transboundary groundwaters; the development of technical guidelines on monitoring in an integrated updated guide; training activities and regional workshops to raise awareness and draw lessons from regional experiences; and synergies with other fields of activities, especially the NPDs.

Hilario Sanha, Guinea-Bissau, presented on progress made in the Senegalo-Mauritanian Aquifer basin. He outlined efforts to promote resilience, stability, and sustainable development through shared management of the aquifer. He described operational objectives, including: the protection and sustainable management of the strategic water resource; developing the necessary governance framework for cooperation; and mobilizing political support and funding. He stressed that the follow-up and evaluation network for groundwaters faces challenges, such as insufficient number of monitoring stations or

insufficiently optimized stations, and limited ability to process data into useful information for management purposes.

The EU stressed the importance of water quality monitoring and strongly supported integrating monitoring into thematic activities.

FINLAND underscored the importance of supporting monitoring and assessment, sharing good practices, and taking into consideration differing regional needs.

Final Decision: The MOP:

- urges countries, joint bodies, and partner organizations to contribute to the update of the Strategies for Monitoring and Assessment of Transboundary Rivers, Lakes and Groundwaters and the good practices publication;
- appreciates progress made in advancing data exchange, joint monitoring, and assessment in transboundary basins; and
- reaffirms its commitment to provide tailored assistance and support for developing joint or coordinated monitoring or information and data exchange in transboundary basins and invites countries and partner organizations to provide support.

Supporting Equitable and Sustainable Water Allocation in the Transboundary Context

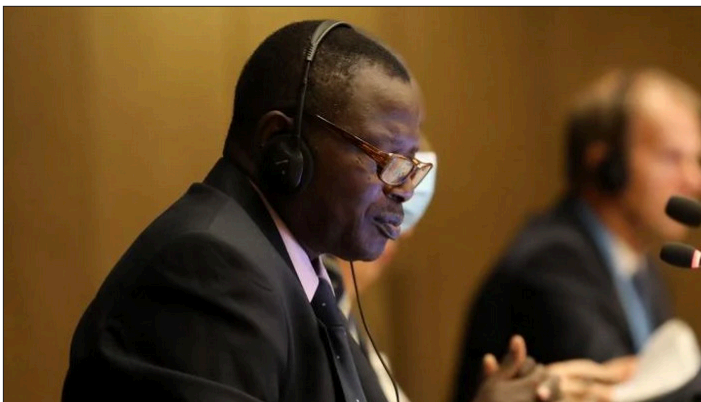
Péter Kovács, Hungary, Chair of the Expert Group, introduced and launched the Handbook on water allocation in a transboundary context (ECE/MP.WAT/64). He said an expert group was established to provide technical guidance, develop case studies, and review drafts of the Handbook, stressing that development has been in progress since 2019. Lessons learned, he highlighted, include that history shows transboundary allocation arrangements can work for the benefit of states, but only if well designed, jointly agreed, adaptable, and effectively implemented. He outlined suggestions for future work, including capacity-building workshops, a brief for policymakers, and a webinar to promote the use of the Handbook.

CHAD said his country is experiencing an unprecedented drought and are looking for operational decisions to fairly distribute water resources, underscoring that adopting the Handbook will help strengthen capacity to manage this complex issue. KAZAKHSTAN described support for developing the Handbook, saying their region has contributed to analysis and case studies. He expressed hope that the Handbook will become a useful, practical guidance for governments and officials in the field of water resource management.

TANZANIA noted water allocation is a challenge, stressing that proper arrangements will benefit all riparian states.

The ORGANIZATION FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE SENEGAL RIVER BASIN said the issue of transboundary water sharing is worsened by climate change and ecosystem degradation. He said the Handbook is a fundamental tool for transboundary water management and called for its implementation as soon as possible. FINLAND stated the Handbook is not an end in itself; future work will help implementation of the Handbook, noting Finnish funding for a workshop in Africa to help implement the Handbook.

The EU said conducting awareness raising activities for the Handbook will help countries move towards water security and cope with increasing water scarcity, and encouraged dialogue with other members in transboundary water agreements. AUSTRALIA said the Handbook will support good transboundary water governance in the future, allowing for water allocation to adapt to social, economic, and environmental



Hilario Sanha, Guinea-Bissau

changes. EGYPT said although they do not agree with the Handbook in its entirety, it provides several useful examples and, among others, clarifies the legal requirements of prior notification.

Chair Kovács noted the Handbook is a tool to assist countries rather than a legally binding document and requested also thanking Finland for its outstanding support of the process, in the draft decision.

Final Decision: The MOP:

- adopts the Handbook on water allocation in a transboundary context and calls upon countries, basins, and partners to use it in their work on transboundary water cooperation;
- emphasizes the important role that the Handbook could play in building capacity on water allocation in a transboundary context and contribute to sustainable management of transboundary waters; and
- decides to include “Supporting equitable and sustainable water allocation in a transboundary context” in the POW 2022-2024.

European Union Water Initiative and National Policy Dialogues

Chair Liiv introduced this agenda item.

Alexander Belokurov, UNECE, and Eric Tardieu, International Office for Water, France, presented on the EUWI NPDs on IWRM on behalf of the consortium (UNECE, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), Environment Agency Austria, and the International Office for Water of France).

Belokurov provided background information on the NPDs on integrated water management, and water supply and sanitation, noting they are currently ongoing in 10 countries, including four in Central Asia, involving a diverse set of stakeholders. Regarding the EUWI NPDs in Central Asia, he underscored support for: reporting on SDG indicator 6.5.2 provided through regional workshops and individually to countries, resulting in four of them submitting the reports; and policy packages and investment ideas in the water sector. Belokurov further highlighted the EUWI+ project for the six Eastern Partnership countries (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova, and Ukraine). He presented the EUWI+ impact in key figures and focused on capacity development and support for: strategic planning; updating legislative frameworks; harmonizing with the EU acquis, the body of common rights and obligations that are binding on all EU countries; multilateral



Alexander Belokurov, UNECE

environmental agreement implementation; and transboundary water cooperation.

Tardieu highlighted EUWI+ results, including developing surface water and groundwater monitoring, and laboratory development. He further drew attention to the development of river basin management plans for 50% of the surface of the Eastern Partnership countries. On lessons learned, he underscored: engagement with local partners at all levels as key to sustainability of NPDs; the need to maintain strong ownership of NPDs by countries and monitor progress; the need to continue exploiting NPDs on strategic and implementation levels as well as sustain them financially and logistically; and the need to secure funding for NPDs in Central Asia beyond September 2022.

TAJKISTAN emphasized the national water sector reform with support from UNECE and other partners. He highlighted the methodology for calculating water balance in water resources, noting growing demand for applying international experience for more sustainable forms of water resource management.

KYRGYZSTAN highlighted support for NPDs for the management of national water resources, stressing the development of a national water strategy, implementation of the national water code, and proper water supply and sanitation. She further highlighted a current dialogue on water resources and climate change.

KAZAKHSTAN focused on implementation of projects under the auspices of the NPDs, including transboundary river cooperation, developing water supply and sanitation in rural areas and small towns, and hydraulic structures. Thanking the EU and the Convention’s Secretariat for the support in conducting the NPDs, he highlighted the plan to launch a project on developing joint measures to prevent accidental water pollution.

GEORGIA noted invaluable support under EUWI+ for advancing planned water reform and strengthening cooperation with neighboring countries in all aspects of integrated water management. She stressed that the NPDs platform helps develop common understanding on national and transboundary decisions, noting wide stakeholder participation and involvement.

ARMENIA reported progress on developing legislative and policy documents, changes to the water code and the development of a roadmap. He also noted activities relating to *inter alia*: the irrigation sector; new standards for water quality in Lake Sevan; and the enhancement of surface and groundwater monitoring.

The EU noted supporting better water management is high priority. She stressed that the NPDs have demonstrated that water is a horizontal issue and helped define investment needs for improved water management. She shared the EU’s intention to make modern water services accessible to an additional three million people as well as an economic and investment plan amounting to EUR 750 million.

UKRAINE described the NPDs as a “consultative platform,” explaining that the last dialogue was held in November 2019 and the objective had been to discuss the state of play regarding the water sector, the need for more coherence, and sectoral policies and challenges in river basin planning.

MOLDOVA highlighted, among others, support for fitting out a monitoring laboratory in its environment agency.

The OECD underscored the importance of multi stakeholder NPDs, noting that increasingly complex issues have progressed and that the OECD have facilitated reform of economic instruments, water sector financing, and long-term strategic planning.

The GWP highlighted work on assessing the implementation of IWRM in the region.

Final Decision: The MOP:

- reconfirms the important role of NPDs in fostering the implementation and application of the Water Convention and its Protocol on Water and Health;
- thanks the European Commission for its support to that area of work, as well as partners for their support for the Dialogues process and welcomes plans to continue supporting this work in the framework of the “Eastern Partnership policy beyond 2020. Reinforcing Resilience - an Eastern Partnership that delivers for all,” in line with the European Green Deal and post-COVID-19 green recovery; and
- decides to include “Supporting National Policy Dialogues on IWRM under the European Union Water Initiative” in the POW 2022-2024.

Water-Food-Energy-Ecosystems Nexus in Transboundary Basins

Chair Kovács introduced this agenda item, including the “Methodology for assessing the water-food-energy-ecosystems nexus in transboundary basins and experiences from its application: synthesis” (ECE/MP.WAT/55). Seppo Rekolainen, Water-Food-Energy-Ecosystems Nexus Task Force Chair, and Lucia De Strasser, UNECE Secretariat, presented on the report “Solutions and investments in the water-food-energy-ecosystems nexus” (ECE/MP.WAT/66). They outlined main achievements including establishing cross-sectoral dialogues and assessments in three basins during the triennium 2019-2021, increased cooperation between water and energy sectors within the UNECE Secretariat, and continued capacity building and experience sharing.

One of the main findings of the report, they noted, is that private funding from agricultural and energy sectors is needed to achieve SDG 6 and meet SDG indicator 6.5.2. They noted three nexus assessments have been conducted on the Drina and Drin River Basins, and the North-Western Sahara Aquifer System. They outlined lessons learned for future work include that: institutional arrangements and processes must be conducive to enhance cross-sectoral cooperation; political will is key

for progress; and mutual trust is necessary for cross-sectoral cooperation. Suggested future work included supporting nexus work in Central Asia.

Chair Kovács introduced a panel discussion, asking each panelist to illustrate projects and collaborations with a focus on nexus solutions and investments.

Heide Jekel, Germany, stressed the launch of a new climate initiative nexus project, operationalizing the nexus at transboundary and regional levels in Central Asian countries. She highlighted uneven distribution of resources, strong interdependencies, low connectivity, and expected increasing climate-related water stresses in the region. Noting the need for political support and commitment, she underscored that Central Asia would benefit from stronger intersectoral approaches and transboundary cooperation.

Margalita Arabidze, Georgia, focused on the Alazani/Ganikh Basin between Georgia and Azerbaijan. She highlighted hydropower development, and emphasized the objective to improve living conditions, and ensure sustainable access to sufficient food, water, energy, and environmental resources.

Silvia Saravia, Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) addressed cooperation between UNECE and ECLAC on the promotion of the nexus approach. She noted that 70% of the water bodies in Latin America are transboundary and cooperation is lacking with some notable exceptions. Saravia highlighted steps needed to adopt a nexus approach, including: promoting participation and dialogue; establishing concrete, measurable, cost-effective goals; strengthening financial planning and leadership; and advancing the development of intersectoral actions in the region.

Raúl Muñoz Castillo, Inter-American Development Bank, focused on the importance of cross-sectoral cooperation to facilitate investments in shared basins. He described a nexus initiative that started in 2016 working at the basin level. He highlighted the need to strengthen institutional coordination mechanisms, and frameworks to reduce risk and facilitate transboundary investments. He outlined future steps, including a regional symposium in Bolivia, emphasizing the Water Convention’s importance as a catalyst for sustainable investment in the region.

Dimitris Faloutsos, GWP-Mediterranean, addressed cooperation in the Western Balkans, Middle East, and North Africa. He noted the aim to support nexus technical work and bring together a wide range of stakeholders, gradually building trust to enhance cooperation. He highlighted the co-optimization of hydropower production in the Drin basin and outlined plans to implement the nexus approach in North Africa and the Middle East.

Mirza Hujic, Assistant Minister of Foreign Trade and Economic Relations, Bosnia and Herzegovina, addressed the nexus approach in the Drin River basin, spanning across Montenegro, Serbia, and Bosnia and Herzegovina. He emphasized the need to improve cooperation with institutions and stakeholders between countries and at the national level; explore the opportunities generated by trade-off electricity; improve energy efficiency; and improve information exchange.

In the ensuing discussion, the EU highlighted nexus solutions as the basis for efficient use of water resources, stimulating sustainable development, improving security, increasing efficiency, reducing conflict, maximizing investments,



Lucia de Strasser, UNECE

and protecting the environment. He encouraged Parties to recommend the use of the nexus approach and participate in nexus projects, calling for the mobilization of relevant resources.

EGYPT noted that the nexus approach is not clearly defined or tested in practice, stressing it may succeed in some contexts, but not in others. He underscored challenges, such as data gathering, and suggested focusing on renewable energy, relieving pressure on water resources, and boosting water security and sustainability.

SPAIN noted that, as a water scarce country, they mainstream the nexus approach in the management of national water resources, highlighting the use of reservoirs. She urged countries with shared resources or water shortages to consider the nexus approach for integrated water management.

Final Decision: The MOP, *inter alia*:

- reconfirms the importance of increasing synergies between the water-food-energy-ecosystems sectors to more sustainably manage resources in transboundary basins;
- reconfirms the importance of a nexus approach to cross-cutting issues, such as climate action;
- welcomes the progress made in supporting intersectoral dialogues and assessments under the Convention through applying the nexus approach and in operationalizing nexus solutions and investments to increase the impact of nexus assessments;
- welcomes the toolkit publication “Towards sustainable renewable energy investment and deployment: Trade-offs and opportunities with water resources and the environment” and the synthesis publication “Solutions and investments in the water-food-energy-ecosystems nexus: a synthesis of experiences in transboundary basins” and encourages countries, basins, joint bodies and partner organizations to use them;
- decides to include “Supporting intersectoral dialogues and assessments through the application of the water-food-energy-ecosystems nexus approach” in the POW 2022–2024; and
- requests the Secretariat to prepare and publish focused material to support partners in applying the nexus methodology, and to continue strengthening cooperation with Sustainable Energy and other divisions of UNECE on sustainable natural resources management.



Niels Vlaanderen, Netherlands

Facilitating Financing of Transboundary Water Cooperation

Isabella Pagotto, Global Programme Water, Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), Switzerland, as co-chair of this work programme area, presented progress achieved and lessons learned since 2018. On main achievements she noted: better understanding of funding and financing issues for river basin organizations’ riparian states and their projects; and developing a community for peer learning and exchange between basins, countries, and international financial institutions.

Niels Vlaanderen, Ministry of Infrastructure and Water Management, the Netherlands, introduced the 2021 flagship publication “Funding and financing of transboundary water cooperation and basin development.” He noted that the concept and scope of the publication had been developed through a consultative process in cooperation with various partners. On key messages, he highlighted, *inter alia*, that: domestic budgetary resources should be the main funding source; private funding and financing can be leveraged to explore additional opportunities; and innovative financial instruments can potentially offer new opportunities. On future work, he noted the need to diversify financial resources mobilized for transboundary water cooperation and basin development.

The GEF described the publication as an important contribution to long-term, country-driven financing. He noted that purely nationally-oriented planning and action are more costly options for producing water, food, and energy, and can cause friction with neighbors. He called for continuing to improve the spectrum of funding from grants to loan finance, including public and private financing.

The ASIAN DEVELOPMENT BANK highlighted their contribution in terms of work on blended finance and elaborated on: work under the Mekong regional programme; efforts to align Aral Sea Basin plans; and work on the water, food, and energy nexus.

LUXEMBOURG lamented lack of financing for many well-established river commissions and urged advocating for financing by highlighting the importance of maintaining the wide range of activities these river commissions undertake. GUINEA-BISSAU urged ensuring the availability of resources for post-project phases, so that the results are not undermined. He noted the establishment of a national water fund to ensure projects can have a long-term impact.

EGYPT said financing of transboundary cooperation should promote consensus and not divisions between riparian states. He lamented that not all river basin organizations include all riparian states. Mauritania highlighted the importance of water sector funding to achieve the SDGs. He said the declaration on the SMAB will allow for advocacy for additional resources to support the initiative.

Final Decision: The MOP among others:

- stresses the importance of financing transboundary water cooperation and basin development;
- welcomes progress made in facilitating knowledge sharing and peer learning on funding and financing of transboundary water cooperation through activities under the Convention;

- welcomes increased cooperation with financial institutions and other partner organizations in raising awareness of the importance of financing transboundary water cooperation and basin development, and invites such institutions to further strengthen cooperation with the Convention;
- welcomes the publication “Funding and financing of transboundary water cooperation and basin development”;
- encourages countries, joint bodies, partner organizations, and other interested actors to use the publication to mobilize financial resources for transboundary water cooperation;
- invites countries and joint bodies to communicate to the Secretariat requests for specific support related to facilitating the financing of transboundary water cooperation and basin development until December 2021; and
- decides to include “Facilitating funding and financing of transboundary water cooperation and basin development” in the POW 2022–2024.

Reporting under the Convention and on Indicator 6.5.2 of the Sustainable Development Goals

Chair Kovács introduced this agenda item (ECE/MP.WAT/2021/6). Sarah Tiefenauer-Linardon, UNECE, and Alice Aureli, UNESCO, presented the report “Progress on Transboundary Water Cooperation: Global status of SDG indicator 6.5.2 and acceleration needs.” They lauded the high level of engagement, with 129 out of 153 countries having submitted reports. They stressed, however, that only 24 countries reported that all transboundary waters were covered by operational arrangements, and more progress is needed in Latin America and Asia. They mentioned the need to accelerate progress on: addressing data gaps, particularly for aquifers, and scaling up capacity development; strengthening legal frameworks; and coordinating efforts to advance transboundary cooperation with stakeholders. They called for addressing challenges in financing for transboundary cooperation and underscored that central to all of this is political will. Future work, they said, includes developing an online reporting systems and reinforcing coordination with partners. A number of upcoming events to discuss progress on SDG indicator 6.5.2. were also highlighted.

Sonja Koeppel introduced the draft decision on establishing an online reporting system for delegates’ consideration (ECE/MP.WAT/2021/6).

Slovenia, on behalf of the EU and its member states, emphasized the need to accelerate the process to establish an online reporting system. He said national reports should be used to identify gaps and establish roadmaps to achieve SDG 6. He suggested intergovernmental organizations, UN agencies, and others make use of the report to support countries in improving on SDG indicator 6.5.2. He called on all Parties to submit reports for the next monitoring exercise and urged coordination of reporting at the basin level.

Chair Kovács invited a panel to share their experiences with reporting.

Luc Zwank, Luxembourg, addressed key factors to accelerate progress on transboundary water cooperation. He outlined regional cooperation with Wallonia on wastewater sanitation and drinking water production. Using regional examples, he highlighted cooperation can exist at different levels, stressing the value of local initiatives.



Sonja Koeppel, Secretary of the Water Convention

Maria Amakali, Namibia, emphasized that cooperation between riparian countries in the region would contribute towards protecting biodiversity and water resources, and improve livelihoods promoting peace and stability. She noted that 60% of water use in Namibia comes from groundwater. She underscored that the Orange-Senqu River Commission, which promotes the equitable and sustainable development of the resources of the Orange-Senqu River, needs to manage surface and groundwater in an integrated manner.

Conchita Marcuello, Spain, highlighted the Ibero-American Conference of Water Directors, noting work on transboundary cooperation through training programmes and technical dialogues. She reflected on work related to the SDG 6 indicators, noting that an in-depth analysis of indicator 6.5.2 for the Latin American region would be carried out by CODIA this year, while analysis on indicator 6.5.1 (degree of IWRM implementation) is available.

Ziad Khayat, UN Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), noted that the Arab region is water scarce and countries depend on transboundary water resources, making cooperation an imperative. He noted that cooperation exists in the region but with differing degrees of operability and effectiveness, and highlighted ESCWA’s work on indicator 6.5.2, noting considerable progress. He further underscored the transboundary component of indicator 6.5.1.

In the ensuing discussion, ESTONIA noted that the next reporting process should be digitalized, allowing for better and faster data gathering, and more efficient data processing.

A Member of civil society from Cameroon called for further involvement of civil society, stressing the role of maritime economy.

Final Decision: The MOP adopts the decision on reporting as contained in the document ECE/MP.WAT/2021/6 and, among others:

- calls on countries and partners to make use of the reports in order to advance transboundary cooperation;
- requests the Secretariat, subject to the availability of resources, to prepare and publish the third progress report under the Convention in Arabic, English, French, Spanish and Russian;
- requests the UNECE to prepare and publish, together with UNESCO and in the framework of UN-Water, the third report on SDG indicator 6.5.2 in Arabic, English, French, Russian and Spanish; and

- decides to include “Reporting on Sustainable Development Goal indicator 6.5.2 and under the Convention” in the POW 2022–2024.

In the decision set out in document ECE/MP.WAT/2021/6, the MOP, *inter alia*:

- calls on countries to use the reports to improve their transboundary cooperation, in line with the SDG 6 Global Acceleration Framework;
- reiterates the need establish an online reporting system for future reporting exercises under the Convention and on indicator 6.5.2 of the SDGs to facilitate the filling of the template by countries, and data verification and analysis by the co-custodian agencies;
- requests the Secretariat, in cooperation with UNESCO, to introduce the online reporting system, to the extent possible, by the third reporting exercise;
- requests all Parties to submit to the Secretariat their completed templates for the third reporting exercise;
- strongly encourages all countries sharing transboundary waters to report on indicator 6.5.2 of the SDGs in the third reporting exercise;
- encourages countries to cooperate when preparing their national reports with riparian neighbors and/or in the framework of joint bodies;
- encourages countries to prepare their national reports in an inclusive manner coordinating with all relevant national authorities and stakeholders, including youth and indigenous people, and ensuring a gender-balanced participation;
- encourages the UN regional commissions and other partner organizations to promote the findings of the reports, consider preparing regional analysis and make use of the reports in designing their activities in support of transboundary water cooperation;
- requests the Secretariat to carry out capacity-building activities, pending availability of resources;
- invites UNECE and UNESCO to explore opportunities for mainstreaming a gender perspective in the upcoming reporting exercises, and cooperate with UN-Water in developing the online reporting system and on capacity-building activities; and
- requests the Secretariat to regularly include exchange of experiences on reporting in the agenda of the Working Group on IWRM and the Working Group on Monitoring and Assessment.

Financing of the Convention

Sonja Koeppel provided an overview of contributions and expenditure for the period 2019-2021 (ECE/MP.WAT/2021/7). Thanking donors and acknowledging new contributors, she noted that Convention does not have a mandatory contribution scheme. Highlighting that some Parties had contributed for the first time, but still less than half of Parties contribute, she emphasized the need for more sustainable financing.

Lea Kauppi, Water Convention Bureau Member, Finland, explained the Bureau had been discussing a more systematic approach to financing the Convention since only around a third of all the Parties contribute, and in 2016-2018 only 17% of contributions were unearmarked and did not require individual reports. She described that the Bureau suggested a system of targets for financial sustainability and outlined proposed targets,



Lea Kauppi, Finland

including that by 2024 at least 50%, and by 2030 at least 66%, of all Parties finance the POW.

Underscoring the need for sustainable and predictable funding, the EU: welcomed all contributions, particularly the first-time ones; and urged all Parties to support the POW according to their capabilities, especially with unearmarked contributions.

KAZAKHSTAN highlighted its contribution, stressing the need to increase the overall level of funding for the Convention.

Final Decision: The MOP:

- takes note of the overview of contributions and expenditures in 2019–2021;
- adopts the decision on targets for a more sustainable and predictable funding of the work under the Convention as contained in the document ECE/MP.WAT/2021/8;
- takes note of the efforts undertaken by the Secretariat and the Bureau, following its request at MOP8, to solicit the provision of additional human and financial resources from the regular budget to ensure the POW’s effective management and full implementation;
- expresses regret that despite these efforts, it was not possible to secure additional resources from the regular budget to the work under the Water Convention and decides to discuss this issue again at future MOP sessions;
- requests the UNECE Executive Secretary to establish a new post at P5 level to be funded from voluntary extra budgetary contributions to act as Secretary of the Water Convention; and
- invites the UNECE Executive Secretary to consider ways to consolidate the resources dedicated to servicing the Water Convention and the Protocol on Water and Health for maximum efficiency and impact.

In the decision set out in document ECE/MP.WAT/2021/8, the MOP, *inter alia*:

- decides to adopt targets for financial sustainability of the work under the Water Convention;
- urges all Parties to provide regular and unearmarked financial contributions to the trust fund in accordance with the adopted targets;
- encourages Parties to make in-kind contributions to the implementation of the POW;
- invites non-Parties and partners to contribute to the implementation of the work under the Convention;
- entrusts the Working Group on IWRM with the task of regularly reviewing progress in achieving the targets; and

- decides to review the targets, in the light of the progress accomplished, at MOP10.

Identifying, Assessing and Communicating the Benefits of Transboundary Cooperation

Chair Lea Kauppi, Water Convention Bureau Member, Finland, introduced this item (ECE/MP.WAT/47). Harry Liiv, Estonia, summarized work on understanding the benefits of transboundary cooperation. He noted several awareness raising and capacity building activities, stating there are opportunities to deliver more and better distributed benefits. On future work, Liiv suggested promoting and communicating the benefits of transboundary cooperation and highlighting the principles of the Convention, drawing on the benefits of cooperation. He stated this could be done, for example, by developing training modules or by using a benefits lens when facilitating dialogues to support accession to the Convention.

Final Decision: The MOP welcomes progress in applying the “Policy Guidance Note on the Benefits of Transboundary Water Cooperation: Identification, Assessment and Communication” and encourages interested basins and partners to apply and use it. The MOP further thanks Estonia for leading this area of work and decides to include “Promoting and communicating the benefits of transboundary cooperation” in the POW 2022–2024.

Adapting to Climate Change in Transboundary Basins

Chair Kauppi introduced this agenda item (ECE/MP.WAT/2015/4 and ECE/MP.WAT/56). Mami Mizutori, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR), said DRR is interconnected, systemic, and affects every aspect of our development processes. She said strong treaties, and robust institutions and cooperation are necessary to govern transboundary waters and create the necessary DRR plans. She urged sharing benefits derived from the use of water, rather than sharing water itself. She said the European Forum for DRR, which meets in November 2021, will be an importance platform to allow Parties to take stock of progress and further develop relevant strategies.

Sibylle Vermont, Switzerland, and Niels Vlaanderen, the Netherlands, presented on achievements and next steps in this programme area. Vermont underscored that the work of the UNECE Task Force on Water and Climate has allowed countries and basins to be better equipped with knowledge and skills to mainstream climate change adaptation into river basin management planning and related documents and projects. She also noted countries and basins are more aware of options for financing climate change adaptation in transboundary basins.

Niels Vlaanderen presented on lessons learned for future work. He said while transboundary cooperation has many benefits, patience, an open-mind, and willingness to cooperate are necessary for success. He mentioned challenges regarding reaching out to partners in other sectors, lamented the lack of attention on transboundary aquifer management, and called for better coherence between water, disaster, and climate policies. He outlined suggested future work, including: supporting development of transboundary adaptation strategies and implementation of priority measures; developing approaches to address transboundary aspects in NDCs and national adaptation planning; and intensifying cooperation with global climate funds to emphasize the importance of transboundary waters in adapting to climate change.

Andrew Roby, UK, noted that the USD 100 billion target for climate funding is ambitious given the pandemic and economic downturn, emphasizing that investments will save money and lives. He invited participants to UNFCCC COP 26 in Glasgow to make the voice of the water community heard, and called for actively disseminating good practices on water and climate change.

Cong Nguyen Dinh, Mekong River Commission, shared his experience on cooperating under the Global network of basins working on climate change adaptation. He highlighted activities aimed at assessing the impacts of floods and the development of protocols to respond to droughts, as well as regional planning.

Alexandra Moreira, Secretary General, the Amazon Cooperation Treaty Organization (ACTO), highlighted activities aimed at supporting neighboring countries to mainstream climate change and discussed the mapping of climate vulnerability in the Amazon basin. Following her address, the MOP welcomed the Amazon basin to the Global network. The Mono River basin also expressed their interest in joining the network.

The INTERNATIONAL NETWORK OF BASIN ORGANIZATIONS (INBO) highlighted their main priority as operationalizing adaptation at the transboundary level. He noted that the Global network would support implementation of operational projects and affirmed commitment to cooperate with UNECE on concrete action.

Slovenia, on behalf of the EU, acknowledged the work of the UNECE Task Force on water and climate, which enables good practices and exchange of experience, noting that ensuring the availability of fresh water in a sustainable manner is fundamental for resilience.

LUXEMBOURG reflected on the major flooding in the region, in July 2021, pointing to a need revisit current infrastructure and update it for the future, emphasizing that integrating water in climate change policy is crucial.

INDIA outlined a national water policy aimed at minimizing the risk of climate change and enhancing capacity of communities to adopt climate resilience options. She highlighted the “Catch the Rain Campaign,” which has resulted in construction of over three million water harvesting structures.

The UN CONVENTION TO COMBAT DESERTIFICATION (UNCCD) highlighted a radical shift on how to respond to water scarcity, land degradation, and drought through land degradation neutrality, and noted that the Intergovernmental Working Group on Drought is reviewing existing partnerships.



Sibylle Vermont, Switzerland

JORDAN noted that recent UN reports have predicted a decrease in rainfall of up to 13% in the region and called for more focus on the Middle East as one of scarcest areas regarding water.

SWITZERLAND invited basins around the world to join the network and called on donors to continue supporting the initiative.

Final Decision: The MOP:

- welcomes the publication “Financing Climate Change Adaptation in Transboundary Basins: Preparing Bankable Projects,” and encourages countries and joint bodies to use it to identify funding opportunities;
- encourages countries and basins to mainstream water and the benefits of transboundary cooperation into national climate policies and disaster-related documents as well as to integrate health and water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) issues into national climate policies and into transboundary river basin management planning;
- expresses appreciation for the progress made within the basins of the Global network of basins working on climate change adaptation, welcomes the Amazon basin and encourages more transboundary basins to join the Network;
- decides to include “Adapting to climate change in transboundary basins” in the POW 2022–2024; and
- invites countries and partners to contribute to the planned online compendium of good practices on climate change adaptation in transboundary basins.

Water and Industrial Accidents

Chair Kauppi introduced the agenda item.

Bojan Srdić, Serbia, Co-Chair of the Joint *Ad Hoc* Expert Group (JEG) on Water and Industrial Accidents informed participants about the recent and future activities of the JEG under the Water Convention and the Convention on the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents (Industrial Accidents Convention). He highlighted the 2019 Seminar on contingency planning, early warning, and mitigation; underscored key risks in mine tailings accidents and nature hazard-triggered technological (Natech) accidents; and emphasized the need to integrate tailings risks into river basin management plans. He further drew attention to the UNECE global workshop on building climate resilience through improving water management and sanitation at national and transboundary levels. Srdić outlined JEG activities for 2021-2022 and future activities for 2022-2024, including: a follow up to the 2019 contingency planning seminar;

promotion and translation of guidance developed by the JEG; development of a catalogue for accidental pollution events and good practice; and organization of a workshop on good practices for preventing accidental water pollution.

The EU stressed that even small amounts of hazardous substances can cause significant damage, especially in transboundary situations, while risks are further aggravated by climate-related extreme weather events. She encouraged all Parties to disseminate the online toolkit for strengthening mine tailings safety and welcomed JEG’s work.

HUNGARY, as Co-Chair of the JEG, called Parties to nominate experts in the JEG to ensure broad geographical coverage.

Final Decision: The MOP:

- welcomes the publication of the Safety guidelines and good practices for the management and retention of firefighting water and other guidance materials developed by the JEG, and recommends their application by countries;
- recognizes the importance of joint prevention and management approaches to mine tailings safety and the prevention of related water pollution, noting the elevated risk of such accidents as a result of climate change;
- recalls the Safety guidelines and good practices for tailings management facilities developed by the JEG and recommends that countries that extract mineral resources use them;
- invites additional nominations to JEG by 31 October 2021, especially from Parties from the Caucasus, Central Asia and sub-Saharan Africa;
- welcomes the Online Toolkit and Training for Strengthening Mine Tailings Safety and invites countries to use it
- encourages joint bodies to cooperate with the JEG; and
- decides to include “Activities of the Joint *Ad Hoc* Expert Group on Water and Industrial Accidents” in the POW 2022–2024.

Formalizing the Procedure for Proposing to Host Future Sessions of the MOP

Niokhor Ndour, Water Convention Bureau Member, Senegal, presented the procedure for proposing to host future sessions of the MOP (ECE/MP.WAT/2021/9). He noted that the document describes: the procedure; the role of the host country, stressing the importance of political support; applicable UN rules on the holding of intergovernmental meetings; and the financial impact for the host country, clarifying relevant obligations. He added that the document requests that all Parties envisage hosting one of the sessions to promote the Convention.

Final Decision: The MOP adopts the procedure for proposing to host future sessions of the MOP as contained in document ECE/MP.WAT/2021/9. In its decision urges all Parties to consider hosting a MOP session and decides to review the procedure at MOP11.

Date and Venue of the 10th Session of the MOP

Chair Kauppi introduced the item (ECE/MP.WAT/2021/INF.6).

Anita Pipan, Permanent Representative to the UNOG, Slovenia, announced Slovenia’s proposal to host MOP10 in 2024. She said that through their presidency, they hope to, among others, strengthen cooperation and boost the globalization process of the Convention, thus contributing to achieving SDG 6. Harry Liiv, Estonia, invited participants to an event to be held in Estonia



Mami Mizutori, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Disaster Risk Reduction and Head of UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction

during June/July 2022 to celebrate the 30th anniversary of the Water Convention. He said preparations were ongoing, and an exact date would be communicated in the future.

Final Decision: The MOP accepts Slovenia's offer to host MOP10 in 2024. It decides to celebrate the 30th anniversary of the adoption of the Water Convention in 2022 through a dedicated event to be organized by Estonia in cooperation with Finland and the Secretariat.

International Water Assessment Centre

Chair Kauppi introduced this agenda item (ECE/MP.WAT/54/Add.2 and ECE/MP.WAT/2021/10), noting the International Water Assessment Centre (IWAC) is a collaborative endeavor currently hosted by Kazakhstan.

Serik Akhmetov, Director, IWAC, provided an overview of its work during the last triennium. He outlined activities undertaken in three programmatic areas: adapting to climate change in transboundary basins; supporting monitoring, assessment and information sharing in transboundary basins; and promoting an integrated and intersectoral approach to water management at all levels. Projects, he noted, included technical expert meetings, training, and activities to develop joint measures to prevent and respond to pollution in emergency situations. He highlighted COVID-19 pandemic-related challenges, including some projects being delayed. He said, however, most of the planned activities went ahead as envisaged, with some additional activities carried out as well. He provided an overview of the main focus for 2022–2024, with three areas being addressed: supporting, monitoring, assessment, and information sharing in transboundary basins; promoting an integrated and cross-sectoral approach to water resources management; and reporting on SDG indicator 6.5.2 and implementation of the Convention.

KAZAKHSTAN said the IWAC plays an important role in implementing the Water Convention and reaffirmed its support for IWAC's work in the region.

Final Decision: The MOP:

- welcomes the contribution of IWAC to activities under the Convention in 2019–2021;
- thanks the Government of Kazakhstan for its support provided to IWAC in 2019–2021 and its commitment to continue hosting IWAC;
- adopts the draft programme of work of the IWAC for 2022–2024 (ECE/MP.WAT/2021/10), and calls upon countries, partners, and donors to support its implementation;



Anita Pipan, Slovenia, speaking on behalf of the EU

- requests IWAC to regularly report on the implementation of its activities to the Working Group on IWRM and to MOP10; and
- requests Kazakhstan to prepare, in consultation with the Bureau and the Secretariat, a draft POW for the IWAC for 2025–2027, aligned with the corresponding POW under the Convention, for submission to MOP10.

Programme of Work for 2022–2024, Terms of Reference of the Bodies Established to Implement it, and Resources Needed for its Implementation

Sonja Koeppel presented the POW for 2022–2024 (ECE/MP.WAT/2021/3). Noting that the POW was developed in a consultative manner, she highlighted the overall vision that transboundary waters worldwide are managed in cooperation between riparian countries to promote sustainable development, peace, and security. She highlighted seven programme areas and their respective activities:

- Increasing awareness of and accession to the Convention and application of its principles;
- Supporting monitoring, assessment, and information sharing in transboundary basins;
- Promoting an integrated and intersectoral approach to water resources management at all levels;
- Adapting to climate change in transboundary basins;
- Facilitating funding and financing of transboundary water cooperation and basin development;
- Reporting on SDG indicator 6.5.2 and under the Convention; and
- Partnerships, communication, and knowledge management.

All programme areas are assigned bodies responsible for their implementation and all activities include an estimated budget. In addition, Koeppel outlined the overall resource requirements of USD 13,413,800 for the entire POW.

The EU supported the POW, expressing appreciation for the comprehensive and inclusive participatory process for its development. He underscored the need for dedicated financial support, calling on all Parties to consider the required financial contributions. He highlighted the interlinkages between the programme areas of the POW, and stressed that the EU will provide further support for the globalization of the Water Convention, prioritizing riparian countries that share water resources with countries already Parties to the Convention.

LUXEMBOURG, ESTONIA, and FINLAND welcomed the POW, noting they will continue supporting the work of the Convention. ESTONIA requested adding under the programme area on increasing awareness of the Convention, the convening of a meeting of parliamentarians to discuss issues under the Convention.

TANZANIA and ZAMBIA requested taking part in the implementation of the POW.

Final Decision: The MOP:

- takes note of the report on the implementation of the POW 2019–2021;
- adopts the POW 2022–2024, the bodies established to implement it, and the relevant budget;
- requests the Bureau to further develop the POW and adapt it to changing circumstances; and
- calls on Parties to provide the necessary extrabudgetary resources and invites non-parties and partners to also support implementation of the POW 2022–2024.

Promotion and Partnerships

Chair Harry Liiv, Bureau Member, Estonia, introduced this agenda item, inviting partners to share updates on their planned activities in support of the Convention. The discussion was informed by the “Strategy for the implementation of the Convention at the global level” (ECE/MP.WAT/54/Add.2) and the “Review of the implementation of the Strategy for the implementation of the Convention at the global level” (ECE/MP.WAT/2021/4).

Alena Drazdova, Chair of the Protocol on Water and Health, provided an update on the work under the Protocol and the cooperation with the Convention, highlighting the joint workshop on building climate resilience through improving water management and sanitation at national and transboundary levels, which took place from 29 September-1 October 2021. She outlined plans to host a strategic roundtable on increasing resilience to climate change under the Protocol, in January 2022.

Abdoulaye Sene, Executive Secretary, 9th World Water Forum, noted a memorandum of understanding was signed with the UNECE Secretariat, to support the organization of the World Water Forum. Steffen Hansen, GEF, stated that cooperation with the Water Convention has been largely through the GEF-International Waters Focal Area, which works to foster transboundary cooperation and improved governance of shared lakes, aquifers, and river basins. He said that more than USD 2.2 billion has been invested in grants through the Focal Area.

Kelly Ann Naylor, UN Children’s Fund (UNICEF), said improved water governance and transboundary cooperation contributes to improved rights for children. She said they hope to support the Convention through, among other things, engaging with countries acceding to the Convention, to assist in implementation. Arun Shrestha, International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD) highlighted activities supporting the Convention, including a regional webinar for strengthening DRR, and promoting the water-energy-food nexus in the region. Mara Tignino, Geneva Water Hub, drew attention to work in support of the Convention, citing the establishment of an innovative finance mechanism.

The EU advocated an inclusive, regional basin approach that involves all stakeholders, noting funding is available to assist implementation of the Convention. The WATER-YOUTH NETWORK underscored the need for tools and mechanisms to allow for more youth involvement. The GWP underscored the role it can play in supporting accession to the Convention by supporting countries in this process, highlighting its role in



Niokhor Ndour, Senegal

promoting and implementing the nexus agenda in the different water basins.

Introducing the draft partnership decision, Ekaterina Veselova, Water Convention Bureau Member, Russian Federation, noted that the Convention has over 50 partners and the aim is to further strengthen partnerships in order to achieve the objectives of the Convention at the global level.

Final Decision: The MOP adopts the decision on partnerships for the global implementation of the Water Convention (ECE/MP.WAT/2021/11). The MOP further welcomes the information provided on the Protocol on Water and Health and encourages synergies between the activities under the Convention and the Protocol. The MOP further decides to include “partnerships, communication, and knowledge management” in the POW 2022-2024.

In the decision contained in document ECE/MP.WAT/2021/11, the MOP, *inter alia*:

- emphasizes the importance of partnerships with international organizations, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), academia and the business sector to strengthen transboundary water cooperation;
- affirms that strengthening partnerships is crucial for the Water Convention to accelerate progress on transboundary water cooperation in achieving SDG 6 and its target 6.5, as well as other water-related SDGs;
- recognizes the vital role that joint bodies and river basin organizations play, as well as the importance of academia and international organizations in sharing information and building capacity;
- expresses its appreciation for: partnerships with regional organizations to support awareness-raising, capacity-building, implementation, and further accessions to the Water Convention; the ongoing and strengthened cooperation between international financial institutions and the Water Convention; and cooperation with the GEF and UNESCO;
- decides to continue cooperating closely with the GEF, entrusting the Secretariat to further strengthen cooperation;
- decides to develop and further enhance cooperation with existing and new partners, and invites relevant organizations and others to join the activities of the Convention; and
- decides to regularly review progress and gaps in the development of partnerships.

Election of Officers

MOP Chair Aitzhanova outlined the election process.

The MOP elected its Bureau by acclamation: Harry Liiv, Estonia, as Chair; Aleš Bizjak, Slovenia, and Akzan Shiranov, Kazakhstan, as Vice-Chairs; Heide Jekel, Germany, as Co-chair of the Working Group on IWRM; Niokhor Ndour, Senegal, as Co-chair of the Working Group on Monitoring and Assessment; and Peter Kovács, Hungary, Eugenie Avram, France, Sibylle Vermont, Switzerland, Ekaterina Veselova, Russian Federation, Leyla Aliyeva, Azerbaijan, and Bernadette Adjei, Ghana, as Bureau members. The Co-Chair from Finland of the Working Group on Monitoring and Assessment will be decided at a later stage.

Final Decision: The MOP elected its Bureau and agreed that the Bureau members in charge of the Working Group on IWRM and on Monitoring and Assessment, would remain in office until the Working Groups officially elects their own chairs.

Presentation of the Main Decisions

On Friday afternoon, MOP Chair Aitzhanova read out the draft list of decisions. Revised language was introduced on the draft decision on the high-level session on water and peace, emphasizing the important linkages between climate change, water, and stability. Delegates adopted the package by acclamation.

Final Decision: The MOP reviewed and adopted the decisions taken during the session and entrusted the Secretariat, in consultation with the Bureau, with finalizing the MOP9 report.

Closing Plenary

Francesca Bernardini, Chief of the transboundary cooperation section of UNECE, acknowledged the work of previous MOP chairs and paid a special tribute to Lea Kauppi, Bureau Member, Finland, for her contribution to the Convention over the years.

Describing the Convention as “family business,” Kauppi expressed satisfaction that the Convention is in good hands, especially with the new countries joining. She hoped for a future where all transboundary waters are jointly and sustainably managed.

In her closing statement, Sonja Koepfel thanked Kazakhstan for their leadership over the last three years, lauding their engagement on the many issues addressed by the Water Convention. Thanking colleagues, participants, and other stakeholders, she said she could not have imagined the MOP would be so successful, given it was held in a hybrid format.

Aliya Shalabekova, Vice Minister of Ecology, Geology, and Natural Resources, Kazakhstan, via video address, underscored cooperation on the sustainable management of transboundary water resources as key for security and peace at regional and global levels. She encouraged all countries not yet Parties to the Convention to start the accession process and thanked all for their contribution.

Tõnis Mölder, Minister of the Environment, Estonia, via video address, underscored that the COVID-19 pandemic has led to an increased use of digital solutions, expressing hope that, in the coming years, digital solutions will also be utilized for transboundary water management. He highlighted the role of transboundary water cooperation in fostering stability and peace, and drew attention to several publications launched during the meeting on transboundary water management. Mölder further

expressed satisfaction that climate change themes were being integrated into the work of the Convention. He concluded by inviting all participants to a transboundary water conference to be held in Tallinn in 2022, celebrating the 30th anniversary of the adoption of the Convention.

Chair Zhanar Aitzhanova, Kazakhstan, congratulated all Members, participants, the Government of Estonia, UNECE, the Secretariat, and others on a successful meeting. She noted that Kazakhstan is proud of the fact that during its presidency, three new Parties, Ghana, Guinea-Bissau, and Togo joined the Convention. She expressed hope that the Water Convention would be a universal one in the future, further enhancing transboundary water cooperation. She gavelled MOP9 to a close at 4:53 pm.

Upcoming Meetings

First Part of the UN Biodiversity Conference (CBD COP15): The first part of CBD COP15, the 10th meeting of the COP serving as the MOP to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety, and the 4th meeting of the COP serving as the MOP to the Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit-sharing are scheduled to take place in a virtual format with limited onsite presence of delegates from embassies and organizations based in China. The first part will include the opening of the meetings and will address agenda items identified by the Bureau as essential for continuing the operations of the Convention and its Protocols, including the budget. There will also be a High-level Segment on 12 and 13 October. **dates:** 11-15 October 2021 **location:** Kunming, China, and online **www:** cbd.int/meetings/COP-15

World Health Summit: The Summit is a strategic global health forum convening leaders in politics, science, medicine, the private sector, and civil society, with the SDGs at its core. Central topics in 2021 are: vaccines, the role of the EU in global health, mental health, artificial intelligence, lessons learned in pandemic preparedness, and the WHO Council on the Economics of Health for All. It is convened under the patronage of Germany, France, the European Commission, and the WHO. **dates:** 24-26 October 2021 **location:** Berlin, Germany and virtual **www:** www.worldhealthsummit.org

UNFCCC COP 26: The 26th session of the COP (COP 26), the 16th meeting of the COP serving as the MOP to the Kyoto



From L-R: Rémy Kinna, UNECE; Sonja Koepfel, Secretary of the Water Convention; and Harry Liiv, Estonia



From L-R: Cecilia Abena Dapaah, Minister of Sanitation and Water Resources, Ghana; Harry Liiv, Estonia; and Clifford Braimah, Ghana

Protocol (CMP 16), and the third meeting of the COP serving as the MOP to the Paris Agreement (CMA 3) will convene. **dates:** 1-12 November 2021 **location:** Glasgow, Scotland, UK **www:** unfccc.int/process-and-meetings/conferences/glasgow-climate-change-conference

European Forum for Disaster Risk Reduction: The European Forum for Disaster Risk Reduction (EFDRR) is a triennial meeting to address regional DRR challenges. It is expected to take stock of lessons from the COVID-19 crisis; review progress to date in implementing the Sendai Framework and articulate what changes are needed for a transformative agenda on DRR; and commit to ensuring that a disaster impact is never again so severe as the COVID-19 pandemic. It is also expected to adopt the 2021-2030 EFDRR Roadmap. **dates:** 24-26 November 2021 **location:** Matosinhos, Portugal, and online **www:** efdr.undrr.org/

ISARM2021: Convening under the theme “Transboundary Aquifers: Challenges and the way forward,” the second international UNESCO Conference on transboundary aquifers aims to bring together policy makers, experts and others and provide a platform to exchange ideas on transboundary aquifers management. **dates:** 6-9 December 2021 **location:** online **www:** en.unesco.org/conference/isarm2021/

61st meeting of the Global Environment Facility Council: The Council, the GEF’s main governing body, meets twice annually to develop, adopt and evaluate the operational policies and programmes for GEF-financed activities. It also reviews and approves the work programme (projects submitted for approval). **dates:** 7-9 December 2021 **location:** Washington, D.C., US **www:** thegef.org/council-meetings/gef-61st-council-meeting

Resumed Sessions of the CBD Subsidiary Bodies and WG-3 on the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework: The resumed sessions of SBSTTA-24, SBI-3 and the third meeting of the Open-ended Working Group on the post-2020 global biodiversity framework are scheduled to reconvene as face-to-face meetings and address outstanding issues in regard to the post-2020 global biodiversity framework and the work of the Convention. **dates:** 12-28 January 2022 (TBC) **location:** Geneva, Switzerland **www:** cbd.int/meetings

Resumed Fifth Session of the UNEA (UNEA 5.2): UNEA-5.2 will take place under the theme “Strengthening Actions for Nature to Achieve the SDGs.” Its aim will be to connect and consolidate environmental actions within the context of sustainable development and motivate the sharing and implementation of successful approaches. At this Conference, UNEA will also discuss whether to establish an INC towards a new agreement on marine litter and plastic pollution. The in-person session of UNEA-5 will be followed by a Special Session of the UNEA (UNEA-SS), on 3-4 March 2022, to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the creation of UNEP in 1972. **dates:** 28 February – 2 March 2022 **location:** Nairobi, Kenya **www:** www.unep.org/environmentassembly/unea5

Ninth World Water Forum: The 9th World Water Forum is the first of its kind in sub-Saharan Africa. The event will focus on the theme, ‘Water Security for Peace and Development,’ and will consider four priorities: water security and sanitation;

cooperation; rural development; and means tools. **dates:** 22-27 March 2022 **location:** Dakar, Senegal **www:** www.worldwatercouncil.org/en/dakar-2022

Second Part of the UN Biodiversity Conference (CBD COP15): The second part of CBD COP15, the 10th meeting of the COP serving as the MOP to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety, and the 4th meeting of the COP serving as the MOP to the Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit-sharing are scheduled to reconvene in a face-to-face meeting in Kunming, China. COP15 is expected to take a final decision on the post-2020 global biodiversity framework, as well as decisions on related topics, including capacity building and resource mobilization. **dates:** 25 April – 8 May 2022 **location:** Kunming, China **www:** cbd.int/meetings/

2023 UN Conference on the Water Action Decade: The UN General Assembly adopted the resolution on the “Midterm comprehensive review of the implementation of the International Decade for Action, ‘Water for Sustainable Development’ 2018-2028”. (A/RES/73/226). It calls for a Conference on the Midterm Comprehensive Review of the Implementation of the Objectives of the International Decade for Action to be convened. The Conference will focus on the objectives of the Decade as laid out in the Secretary-General’s Plan: Water Action Decade 2018-2028. **dates:** 22-24 March 2023 **location:** New York, US **www:** sdgs.un.org/2023-un-conference-water-action-decade

10th session of the MOP to the Water Convention: MOP10 to the Water Convention is expected to take place in the second half of 2024 in Slovenia. **dates:** TBD, 2024 **location:** Slovenia **www:** unece.org/environment-policy/water

For additional upcoming events, see sdg.iisd.org/

Glossary

DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
EU	European Union
EUWI	EU Water Initiative
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GWP	Global Water Partnership
IWAC	International Water Assessment Centre
IWRM	Integrated Water Resource Management
MOP	Meeting of the Parties
NPD	National Policy Dialogue
POW	Programme of Work
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SMAB	Senegalo-Mauritania Aquifer Basin
UN	United Nations
UNECE	UN Economic Commission for Europe
UNESCO	UN Economic, Social, and Cultural Organization
UNOG	UN Office in Geneva
Water Convention	Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes