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

Sixth session

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Item 7 of the provisional agenda

**Cooperation with other multilateral environmental
agreements and international partners**

Draft decision on cooperation with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

Prepared by the Bureau

Introduction

1. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) has a vast experience in fostering progress towards better water resources assessment and management in order to achieve environmental sustainability, especially through its International Hydrological Programme (IHP).
2. The cooperation between UNESCO and the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes in relation to transboundary groundwaters has proven extremely fruitful; many joint activities have been successfully organized in the past. In particular, the cooperation with UNESCO was very important in the preparation of the first and second Assessment of Transboundary Rivers, Lakes and Groundwaters, the development of draft model provisions on transboundary groundwaters, and the organization of capacity-building activities, such as the recent “Capacity for Water Cooperation” workshop on the legal, institutional and technical aspects of managing transboundary groundwaters (Almaty, Kazakhstan, 29–31 May 2012). The United Nations Economic Cooperation for Europe (ECE) and UNESCO have also been cooperating for several years in the framework of the IHP-Internationally Shared Aquifers Resources Management (ISARM) Programme and in the framework of UN-Water, where they co-lead the Thematic Priority Area on transboundary waters. In addition, ECE and UNESCO have recently started cooperation on activities regarding water and climate change.
3. In view of the upcoming opening of the Convention to States outside the ECE region, it is proposed to strengthen the partnership between UNESCO and the Convention

in the area of transboundary groundwaters, taking into account UNESCO expertise in this area and its many ongoing and planned activities in other regions, as well as the close complementarity of activities implemented by UNESCO and the Convention.

4. The draft decision annexed to the present document gives directions for a closer cooperation between the Convention and UNESCO. The Meeting of the Parties may wish to discuss and adopt it.

Annex

Draft decision on cooperation with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

The Meeting of the Parties,

Acknowledging the increasingly important role of transboundary groundwaters for social and economic development and for the protection of groundwater-related ecosystems, as well as the risks of unsustainable use of these precious resources,

Also acknowledging the success of the cooperation between the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes in the area of transboundary groundwaters, linked both to inventories and assessments of transboundary groundwaters and to capacity-building for their management,

Recalling United Nations General Assembly resolution 66/104, which encourages the States concerned to make appropriate bilateral or regional arrangements for the proper management of their transboundary aquifers and which encourages the International Hydrological Programme (IHP) to offer further scientific and technical assistance to Member States,

Also recalling resolution XX-3 adopted at the twentieth session of the Intergovernmental Council of IHP (Paris, 4–7 June 2012) on the International Initiative on Transboundary Aquifers Management (IHP-ISARM Project), which requests the IHP secretariat to continue studies on transboundary aquifers and assist interested Member States in their studies of transboundary aquifers resources management, including by promoting capacity-building and awareness-raising activities on existing instruments and discussions,

Recognizing the challenges in the implementation of the Convention related to the management and protection of transboundary groundwaters and the importance of joining forces with partners in this area,

Considering the forthcoming opening of the Convention to non-ECE countries with the expected entry into force of the amendment to its articles 25 and 26, as well as the expected entry into force of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Non-navigational Uses of International Watercourses, which will require additional efforts to support implementation of the two instruments worldwide,

Highly valuing the importance of the global network offered by UNESCO, its collaborative centres, regional partners and national IHP committees all over the world, and the potential role of UNESCO in promoting the Convention's application beyond the ECE region,

Recognizing the many benefits which a closer cooperation between the Convention and UNESCO could offer to both sides and, ultimately, to all Parties and non-Parties to the Convention,

1. *Decides* to continue and further enhance cooperation with UNESCO with the shared objective to promote the protection and the reasonable, equitable and sustainable use of transboundary groundwaters, through the exchange of experience and the organization of joint activities;

2. *Invites* UNESCO IHP, within the framework of the Internationally Shared Aquifers Resources Management (ISARM) Programme, to consider the Convention, once it is open for accession by all United Nations Member States, for its work on transboundary groundwaters worldwide;

3. *Also invites* UNESCO IHP, within the framework of the ISARM Programme, to promote the Convention and the guidelines developed under its framework when organizing capacity-building and awareness-raising activities within and outside the ECE region, and to promote the use and implementation of the Model Provisions on Transboundary Groundwaters;

4. *Further invites* UNESCO IHP to report at the meetings of the Working Group on Integrated Water Resources Management and at the seventh session of the Meeting of the Parties about its activities and the efforts undertaken to provide assistance to interested Member States to implement the Convention in relation to transboundary groundwaters.
