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**ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE**

**MEETING OF THE PARTIES TO THE CONVENTION ON  
THE PROTECTION AND USE OF TRANSBOUNDARY  
WATERCOURSES AND INTERNATIONAL LAKES**

**Working Group on Monitoring and Assessment**

**REPORT ON THE SECOND MEETING\*/**

**Introduction**

1. The second meeting of the Working Group on Monitoring and Assessment was held at the invitation of the Government of Finland in Vääksy (Finland) on 5-8 September 2001.

2. The Meeting was attended by representatives of the following countries: Azerbaijan, Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, Greece, Hungary, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russian Federation, Slovakia, Spain, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Turkey.

3. Representatives of United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), the Regional Office for Europe of the World Health Organization (WHO/EURO), the World Health Organization's Collaborating Centre on Groundwater (i.e. British Geological Survey), and the European Topic Center on Inland Waters (ETC/IW), established under the auspices of the European Environmental Agency, also attended the meeting.

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\*/ This document has not been formally edited.

4. A representative of the Peipsi Center for Transboundary Cooperation (formerly known as NGO Lake Pepsi), Estonia, also participated.

5. The meeting was chaired by Mr. Wim Cofino (Netherlands), Chairman of the Working Group, and Ms. Zsuzsa Buzas (Hungary), Vice-Chairperson of the Working Group.

## **I. OPENING OF THE MEETING**

6. Ms. Lea Kauppi, Director-General, Finnish Environment Institute, opened the meeting and made a statement on behalf of the host country. In her statement, she underlined the importance of the work undertaken by the Working Group for the implementation of the Convention. New tasks will arise from the implementation of the Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 October 2000 establishing a framework for Community action in the field of water policy (EC Water Framework Directive) and the implementation of the Protocol on Water and Health. The activities of the International Water Assessment Centre (IWAC), established under the Convention as a common endeavour of the Parties to assist each other and the secretariat, will be instrumental for the implementation of the Convention's provisions.

## **II. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA**

7. Mr. Wim Cofino welcomed the participants and introduced the provisional agenda for the second meeting. The Working Group adopted its agenda as contained in document MP.WAT/WG.2/2001/1, on the understanding that a new item on the launching of discussion forums on the IWAC web site would be addressed as part of the agenda item on the International Water Assessment Centre (IWAC).

## **III. ADOPTION OF THE REPORT OF THE FIRST MEETING**

8. The Working Group adopted the report of its first meeting (MP.WAT/WG.2/2001/2).

9. The delegation of Poland informed the Working Group about the outcome of its consultation with Germany on the possible drafting of guidelines on the monitoring and assessment of estuaries (see paragraph 44 (c) of the report MP.WAT/WG.2/2001/2). As both countries were not in a position to take over the functions as lead country, the Working Group agreed to discuss the whole issue under the agenda item on monitoring of transboundary estuaries.

## **IV. GUIDANCE ON MONITORING AND ASSESSMENT OF TRANSBOUNDARY WATERS**

### **A. Guidelines on monitoring and assessment of lakes**

10. The Working Group examined in depth two working documents prepared by the lead Party, Finland, with the assistance of the Core Group on Lakes: (a) the guidelines on lakes consisting of a strategy part and a technical working document (WGMA/2001/1); and (b) a background document that contained information on international lakes and described monitoring activities (WGMA/2001/2).

11. The Working Group made specific proposals for amendments and additions to both working documents, and agreed on the sharing of work and the further time schedule for the finalization of these documents.

12. Major amendments and additions include: (a) the link to the EC Water Framework Directive as an instrument that transposes the UNECE Water Convention into EC legislation; (b) the link to the provisions of the Protocol on Water and Health; (c) reference to other relevant international programmes (e.g. UNEP and WHO) and international literature; (d) elaboration of water-quantity aspects (water balance, water management balance, etc.); (e) reference to the specificity of monitoring of lakes and reservoirs, (f) specific aspects of early warning systems in river basins with lakes and reservoirs; (g) the link between human health aspects and the monitoring of bacteria (e.g. cyanobacteria) and viruses in lakes; (h) sediment monitoring; (i) relation between land use and monitoring; (j) financial consequence of establishing and running lake monitoring programmes, including step-wise approaches; and (k) the role of joint bodies to implement lake monitoring and assessment programmes following particularly the provisions of article 9 of the Convention.

13. The Working Group:

(a) Expressed its appreciation to the lead country and the members of the Core Group, led by Mr. Pertti Heinonen (Finland), for the work undertaken;

(b) Agreed on the title of the guidance document as UNECE Guidelines on the monitoring and assessment of international and transboundary lakes;

(c) Invited the Working Group members to provide the lead country with their contributions, as promised, by end of September 2001; requested the Core Group to revise the guidance document by early November 2001; and invited the lead country to circulate the revised guidance document thereafter to all members of the Working Group for final examination;

(d) Entrusted the Core Group with the finalization of the guidance document on the basis of new replies, if any, by the Working Group members by end of December 2001;

(e) Invited the lead country to circulate - with the request for checking and updating - the background document on international and transboundary lakes to the focal points or other appropriate experts from countries that share transboundary or international lakes; and requested the Core Group to prepare a revised version for communication to the Working Group members by end of November 2001;

(f) Invited the International Water Assessment Centre to consider posing the guidance and background documents on IWAC's web page.

## **B. Guidelines on monitoring and assessment of estuaries**

14. The Working Group appreciated the offer of Finland to draw up a working document on monitoring and assessment of estuaries for consideration at its third meeting. To enable the Working Group to evaluate the need for guidelines on estuaries, the working document will contain, *inter alia*, a preliminary inventory of transboundary estuaries in the UNECE region, an overview of assessment methods, and a preliminary compilation of literature references.

15. The Working Group also invited its members to contribute to the drafting of this working document, and inform directly the focal point from Finland, Ms. Sirkka Haunia, about their designated experts and expected contributions.

## **C. Laboratory quality management**

16. The Working Group examined working document WGMA/2001/3 prepared by the lead Party, Hungary, which contained the revised draft version of a guidance document on laboratory quality management, and agreed on some editorial changes and amendments.

17. The Working Group noted that the character of this document was a technical report that provided guidance on the operation of water-quality laboratories. It focused on physico-chemical analyses rather than on biological and micro-biological analyses.

18. The Working Group:

(a) Expressed its appreciation to Hungary for its effort to draw up, revise and update the "Technical Report: Guidance on the operation of water-quality laboratories" that included, among others, sections on laboratory quality management and laboratory accreditation;

(b) Considered this guidance document as an excellent background material for establishing an Internet forum on this subject on IWAC's web page;

- (c) Invited IWAC to consider posing the document on its web page.

#### **D. Quality assurance of ecological assessments**

19. The Working Group took note of working document WGMA/2001/4 on quality assurance of ecological assessments prepared by the delegation of the Netherlands. In particular it noted that its earlier report on Quality Assurance, prepared by Mr. J. Timmerman and Mr. M. Gardner as background document for the 1996 UNECE Guidelines on water-quality monitoring and assessment of transboundary rivers, was duly taken into account by the European Committee for Standardization (CEN) when drafting the "Discussion document for CEN TC 230 WG 2 TG 6 of January 2001 on Guidance Standard on Quality Assurance of Ecological Analyses".

20. The Working Group recommended IWAC to consider posing relevant information on this issue on its web page when designing sites for the discussion forums.

#### **E. Sampling**

21. The Working Group examined a technical note (WGMA/2001/5) on certification of persons in environmental sample taking in Finland, prepared by Mr. Pertti Heinonen (Finland), and expressed its appreciation for the work done.

22. The Working Group recommended IWAC to consider posing relevant information on this issue on its web page when designing sites for the discussion forums.

### **V. PILOT PROJECTS**

#### **A. Pilot projects on transboundary rivers**

23. The Working Group noted with appreciation the report of Mr. Martin Adriaanse (Netherlands), project manager, about progress made in the implementation of the pilot projects in 8 river basins in the region, and on possible follow up activities (WGMA/2001/6). It noted that the tasks undertaken under the pilot projects are much broader than monitoring and assessment activities, and include – for example - an identification of river-basin management issues and the evaluation of legislation (e.g. link to the EC Water Framework Directive) that require the involvement of experts from different disciplines. Furthermore, the participants recommended to the project leader that he should keep the Working Group on Water Management informed about the pilot project programme.

24. The Working Group:

- (a) Expressed its appreciation to the lead country and the pilot project countries for the work undertaken; and called upon the pilot project countries that were unable to participate in this meeting to play a more active role in programme implementation;
- (b) Stressed the importance of Memorandums of Understanding (MoU) for project preparation and implementation;
- (c) Expressed the view that the pilot project have at least three additional objectives: (i) strengthening cooperation between the riparian countries; (b) implementation of recommended practices; and (iii) learning from the various approaches taken by countries when implementing the pilot projects.

**B. Pilot projects on transboundary groundwaters**

25. The delegation of the Netherlands, lead Party, informed the Working Group about the draft work plan to implement the Guidelines on monitoring and assessment of transboundary groundwaters (working documents WGMA/2001/7 and 8). The Working Group noted with appreciation the progress made by some countries to draft Memorandums of Understanding (MoU) on joint work under the transboundary groundwater pilot projects as follows: (a) joint work between Hungary and Slovakia will commence in December 2001, based on the already signed MoU; (b) a MoU was drafted by Romania and will be communicated to Bulgaria soon. A proposal for a joint German/Dutch project on groundwaters in the Vechte basin, agreed upon at the local level, still lacks approval at the Government level.

26. The Working Group:

- (a) Welcome the progress made under the transboundary groundwater projects;
- (b) Entrusted the Core Group on Groundwaters to finalize its work plan (as contained in working paper WGMA/2001/7) by the end of December 2001.

**C. Pilot projects on transboundary/international lakes**

27. The Working Group examined the opportunities for implementing pilot projects on the monitoring and assessment of transboundary and international lakes based on a working document (WGMA/2001/9) drawn up by Finland.

28. The Working Group also discussed ways of combining the two programme elements on lakes (programme element 3.1.1 on monitoring and assessment of international lakes, carried out under the auspices of the Working Group on Monitoring and Assessment, and programme element 2.7 on management and sustainable development of international lakes, carried out under the auspices of the Working Group on Water Management), noting the fact that Switzerland was not in a position to act any more as lead country for the latter programme element. It felt that the objectives and work to be undertaken under programme element 2.7 could be included in the list of activities to be undertaken under the pilot project on monitoring and assessment of transboundary and international lakes. It furthermore felt that information on lake management could also be drawn up as part of the case study for the World Water Development Report (see below).

29. The Working Group:

- (a) Entrusted the secretariat to inform the Working Group on Water Management at next meeting (The Hague, Netherlands, 17 and 19 September 2001) about the possible combination of the two programme elements on lakes;
- (b) Noted with appreciation the agreement by Finland, the Russian Federation and Estonia to prepare a joint pilot project comprising two transboundary lakes, Lake Pyhäjärvi and Lake Peipsi and appreciated the offer of Finland to coordinate the joint project;
- (c) Noted the intention of Finland and the Russian Federation to study the feasibility of a pilot project on an international lake, Lake Ladoga, at a later stage;
- (d) Encouraged Slovakia and Poland to study the feasibility of a pilot project on a transboundary reservoir.

#### **D. Pilot project on rapid environmental and health risk assessment**

30. Mr. Roger Aertgeerts (WHO/EURO) informed the Working Group on the progress of the pilot project on rapid environment and health risk assessment, with Italy as lead country, and supported by WHO/EURO and UNECE. This project was initiated by the European Environment and Health Committee, following industrial accidents in the lower Danube basin, and became part of the Convention's work plan in programme area IV (Water and Health) carried out under the auspices of the Working Group on Water and Health.

31. The Working Group:

- (a) Took note of the information provided, particularly, the successful test of the methodology in Bulgaria, and the forthcoming application in Romania and Bulgaria;
- (b) Invited WHO/EURO to keep the Working Group members informed about the expected finalization of the methodology.

## VI. THE SECOND GENERATION OF GUIDELINES

32. The Working Group considered its future tasks, i.e. the need for revising the guidelines (see working document WGMA/2001/10), and addressed particularly the proper balance between strategic and technical aspects of the guidelines for rivers, groundwaters, lakes and estuaries.

33. At least four main future tasks were singled out: (a) drafting of “integrated” guidelines that are broader than the existing ones and that properly address water, general environment and human health aspects; (b) drawing up of technical supporting documentation and its links to the interactive web sites under IWAC’s web page; (c) recommended step-wise approaches for establishing and running of monitoring programmes in low-budget situations; (d) harmonization of monitoring and assessment activities under the Convention and the EC Water Framework Directive.

34. The Working Group:

(a) Agreed to prepare a strategy paper outlining the future work of the Working Group for consideration at the third meeting of the Parties (Spain, autumn 2003);

(b) Established an open-ended Core Group to draft a preliminary working document, including a draft time schedule, for consideration at the third meeting of the Working Group in September 2002. This document could be later used as a basis for the preparation of the strategy paper, and could include issues that require action in the short-term, medium-term and long-term period;

(c) Appreciated the offer of the Netherlands to draft a working document for consideration at its third meeting on recommended step-wise approaches for establishing and running monitoring programmes in low-budget situations;

(d) Appreciated the offer of Ms. Lea Kauppi to lead the Core Group and the readiness of Mr. Martin Adriaanse (Netherlands), Mr. Geo Arnold (Netherlands), Mr. Pertti Heinonen (Finland) and Ms. Małgorzata Landsberg-Uczciwek (Poland) to participate as Core Group members;

(e) Invited the Working Group on Water and Health and the WHO/EURO secretariat to consider the nomination of their experts for the Core Group;

(f) Tentatively scheduled the first meeting of the Core Group for early 2002.

## VII. STATUS OF MAJOR TRANSBOUNDARY RIVERS IN EUROPE

35. The Working Group examined a draft study on the assessment of major transboundary waters in Europe that covers the following river basins: Bug, Danube, Daugava, Elbe, Meuse, Morava, Oder, Rhine, Tagus and Tisza (WGMA/2001/11). The study was prepared by consultants under the auspices of the International Water Assessment Centre (IWAC), and updated on the basis of the outcome of an informal workshop (Prague, 9-10 April 2001) that was attended by the authors of the draft report, representatives of national authorities or institutions, representatives of the respective joint bodies, and staff of IWAC.

36. The Working Group members made specific suggestions for amendments and additions, and agreed to submit their written contributions to IWAC by 30 September 2001.

37. The Working Group also discussed whether possible future editions of such a report should include: (a) rivers where water-quantity aspects are also important; (b) transboundary groundwaters and lakes; (c) sections on cooperation on transboundary waters. It felt, however, that a decision to that effect could only be taken at a later stage, for example, after the completion of the current study.

38. The Working Group:

(a) Welcome the timely preparation of this study and expressed its appreciation to IWAC for the work undertaken;

(b) Noted that the report adds value to the documents on the status of the European environment prepared, *inter alia*, under the auspices of the European Environment Agency;

(c) Invited IWAC to update the study on the basis of the additional inputs by Working Group members, and circulate the updated version to competent staff members of national authorities or joint bodies for final checking of the respective parts of the study;

(d) Invited IWAC to present the study to IWAC's Steering Committee at its second meeting (Bratislava, 29-30 November 2001), and the Bureau of the Meeting of the Parties at its meeting early 2002.

(e) Invited IWAC to present the study on IWAC's web page.

### **VIII. INTERNATIONAL WATER ASSESSMENT CENTRE (IWAC)**

39. The Working Group noted with appreciation the report prepared by Mr. David Nieuwenhuis about IWAC's achievements and the priority of its work until the third meeting of the Parties (working document WGMA/2001/12).

40. The Working Group also noted with appreciation work undertaken by the International Water Assessment Centre (IWAC) to update and extend IWAC's web page ([www.iwac-riza.org](http://www.iwac-riza.org)), and encouraged the participants to act as forum manager for specific discussion forums on the web site. It invited participants to submit to IWAC the addresses of web sites, operated by national authorities, on which information on transboundary monitoring activities are available so that proper links can be established when further developing IWAC's web site. It also encouraged IWAC to include in its web page information on the activities of other Working Groups, as appropriate.

41. Furthermore, the Working Group:

(a) Took note of the outcome of the first meeting of the International Core Group that acts as IWAC's Steering Committee (Lelystad, 7-9 June 2001), including (i) the established network of European institutions and organizations that make up the International Water Assessment Centre; (ii) the proposal regarding IWAC's role in the overall implementation of the Convention's work plan and assistance to the secretariat to contribute to the implementation of global programmes that are linked to water management in a transboundary context; (iii) the evaluation of workshops organized under IWAC's auspices in 2001;

(b) Invited its members to submit - for consideration at IWAC's second Steering Committee meeting (Bratislava, 29-30 November 2001) – proposals for IWAC activities in 2002 and suggestions for the period 2003-2006 (i.e. between the third and fourth meetings of the Parties), including possible topics for workshops;

(c) Invited its members to consider taking up the functions as discussion-forum manager for thematic web sites;

(d) Invited its members to assist IWAC in the preparation of project documentation to apply for financial assistance by donor organizations and programmes.

### **IX. EVALUATION OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE CONVENTION'S WORK ON MONITORING AND ASSESSMENT**

42. The Working Group examined ways of implementing the decision by the Parties to the Convention at their second meeting that Riparian Parties should "report jointly, preferably through their joint bodies, to the Working Group on Monitoring and Assessment

and to the third meeting of the Parties in 2003 on their experience with the implementation of the guidelines on monitoring and assessment of transboundary rivers and transboundary groundwaters" (ECE/MP.WAT/5, paragraph 37 (e)).

43. The Working Group:

(a) Taking into account that the above guidelines contain recommended practices rather than binding obligations, agreed on a two-fold approach: (i) the reporting by Riparian Parties that are carrying out pilot projects; and (ii) the reporting by the other Riparian Parties;

(b) Noted with appreciation that the following Working Group members agreed to compile two tailor-made questionnaires to address the Riparian Parties mentioned in the above sub-paragraph under (i) and (ii): Ms. Zuzsa Buzas (Hungary), Mr. Martin Adriaanse (Netherlands), Mr. Geo Arnold (Netherlands), Mr. Manuel Varela (Spain) and Mr. John Chilton (British Geological Survey);

(c) Recommended that these Working Group members should tentatively meet early 2002 so that the questionnaires can be mailed in spring 2002 to the focal points under the Convention and other relevant contact persons with the request for submitting their replies;

(d) Invited these Working Group members to compile a preliminary draft report for consideration and follow-up decision at the third meeting of the Working Group.

## X. PARTNERS IN COOPERATION

### A. Workshops and conferences under the Convention's work plan

44. The Working Group took note of the information by the secretariat about the tentative programmes of workshops and conferences under the Convention and called upon its members to participate in the following events: (a) workshop on public participation in water management (Netherlands, 18 September 2001); (b) international workshop and exercise: industrial safety and water protection in transboundary river basins (Tiszaujvaros, Hungary, 3-5 October 2001); (c) workshop on approaches and tools for river basin management: experience drawn from the implementation of the EC Water Framework Directive (Bratislava, 15-16 October 2001); (d) workshop on the protection of groundwaters used as a source of drinking water supply (Budapest, 8-10 November 2001); (e) second international conference on sustainable management of transboundary waters in Europe (Miedzyzdroje, Poland, 21-24 April 2002); and (f) conference on sustainable water management and health (Moscow, May/June 2002).

**B. Cooperation with UNESCO's TARM programme**

45. The Working Group noted with appreciation the activities of Mr. Geo Arnold, project leader on transboundary groundwaters, undertaken and planned to be undertaken within the scope of the joint and multi-disciplinary programme aiming to improve the understanding of the scientific, socio-economic, legal, institutional and environmental aspects of regional groundwater resources management (TARM) which is supported by UNESCO, FAO, UNECE and the International Association on Hydrology (IAH).

46. The Working Group invited Mr. Arnold to continue his activities on behalf of the secretariat and IWAC as set out in working document WGMA/2001/14.

**C. World Water Development Report and World Water Assessment Programme**

47. The Working Group took note of the information by the Chairman and the secretariat about the activities of UN system organizations to draw up (as part of the World Water Assessment Programme) a World Water Development Report for consideration at the Third World Water Forum (Tokyo, spring 2003). It agreed to assist the secretariat and the International Water Assessment Centre in the preparation of the regional input to the report.

48. The Working Group, in particular, voiced the need for the inclusion of a case study on cooperation on transboundary waters in the UNECE region already in the first edition of the World Water Development Report. It requested the Director of the International Water Assessment Centre and the secretariat to discuss this issue with UNESCO as lead organization for the preparation of this report and to report to the next session of the Subcommittee on Water Resources of the United Nations Advisory and Coordination Committee (ACC SWR) about the readiness of Estonia and the Russian Federation to prepare a case study on Lake Peipsi (first priority). As an alternative, the Working Group suggested the drawing up of case studies on the River Bug or rivers in Danube sub-basins shared by Hungary and its neighboring countries.<sup>1</sup>

**D. International Conference on Hydrological Challenges in Transboundary Water Resources Management**

49. The Working Group took note of the final programme for the Conference (Koblenz, Germany, 25-27 September 2001) including the conference contributions by members of the Working Group, IWAC and the secretariat.

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<sup>1</sup> The inclusion of a case study on the Lake Peipsi was approved at the next meeting of the ACC SWR (Geneva, 24-28 September 2001), and arrangements have been made for the drafting of the case study jointly by Estonia and the Russian Federation, assisted by the Netherlands, the Joint Estonian-Russian Commission on Transboundary Waters, the Peipsi Centre for Transboundary Cooperation and the secretariat.

#### **E. International Conference on Freshwater**

50. The Working Group took note of the information by the secretariat about the International Conference on Freshwater that will be held in Bonn (Germany) on 3-7 December 2001, and discussed various proposals for Conference contributions.<sup>1</sup>

#### **F. Kiev Ministerial Conference**

51. The Working Group took note of the presentation by Mr. Tim Lack, ETC/IW, on the preparatory process for the Kiev Ministerial Conference “Environment for Europe” (21-23 May 2003). It also evaluated the possible involvement of IWAC in the preparation of assessments of European inland waters.

52. The Working Group authorized Mr. Wim Cofino (IWAC, Netherlands) and Mr. Pertti Heinonen (Finland) to act on behalf of the Working Group when attending the coordination meeting convened under the auspices of UNECE’s Committee on Environmental Policy on 20-21 September 2001 and deciding on possible follow up activities.

### **XI. WORK-PLAN**

53. The Working Group considered its work-plan (MP.WAT/WG.2/2001/2, annex), and updated it on the basis of the decisions taken (annex). The Working Group noted that these amendments and additions are subject to approval by the Bureau of the Meeting of the Parties to the Convention at its meeting early 2002.

### **XII. THIRD MEETING OF THE WORKING GROUP**

54. The Working Group took note with appreciation of the offer of the delegation of Portugal to study the possibility of holding the third meeting in Portugal in the second half of September 2002.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> At the ACC SWR meeting (Geneva, 24-28 September 2001), UNESCO offered to prepare a set of posters highlighting the activities of UN organization in the field of water. A poster describing UNECE’s and IWAC’s water activities was prepared by IWAC and submitted on 23 October 2001 to UNESCO.

<sup>2</sup> At a later stage, the delegation of Portugal informed the secretariat about its decision to hold the meeting in the second half of September 2002.

### **XIII. ELECTION OF OFFICERS**

55. The Working Group noted the recommendation of the Bureau of the Meeting of the Parties to the Convention, made at its meeting in February 2001, that Mr. Wim Cofino, who currently acts both as Chairman of the Working Group and Director of the International Water Assessment Centre, should preferably focus his future activities on the further development of IWAC and its new and additional functions.

56. The Working Group:

(a) Elected Ms. Lea Kauppi (Finland) as new Chairperson of the Working Group and approved Ms. Zsuzsa Buzas (Hungary) in her functions as Vice-Chairperson;

(b) Expressed its appreciation to Mr. Wim Cofino for his able leadership of the Working Group and the many activities initiated by him as Chairman of the Working Group and Head of the International Water Assessment Centre.

### **XIV. CLOSURE**

57. Mrs. Lea Kauppi (Finland) closed the meeting of the Working Group on 7 September 2001; and invited the participants for a technical excursion on 8 September 2001.

Annex

**UPDATE OF PROGRAMME AREA III OF THE 2000-2003 WORK-PLAN  
UNDER THE CONVENTION a/**

**PROGRAMME AREA III: MONITORING AND ASSESSMENT**

**Responsible body:**

Working Group on Monitoring and Assessment *with Finland as lead Party*.  
The collaborative center on monitoring and assessment, the International Water Assessment Centre (IWAC) at the Netherlands Institute for Inland Water Management and Waste Water Treatment, will assist in the implementation of the programme area.

**Rationale:**

Programme area III will help Parties bordering the same transboundary waters to establish and implement joint programmes for monitoring the conditions of transboundary waters, including floods and ice drifts, as well as transboundary impact; agree upon pollution parameters and pollutants whose concentrations in transboundary waters shall be regularly monitored; carry out joint or coordinated assessments of the conditions of transboundary waters and the effectiveness of measures taken to prevent, control and reduce transboundary impact; exchange reasonably available data on environmental conditions of transboundary waters, including monitoring data; inform each other about any critical situation that may have a transboundary impact; and make available to the public the results of water and effluent sampling, together with the results of the verification of compliance with water-quality objectives and permit conditions.

**3.1 Strategies for monitoring and assessing transboundary waters**

**Objectives:**

Guidelines, studies and reports on monitoring and assessing transboundary waters will be drawn up or revised. They will provide a framework for problem identification, specification of information needs, the use of applicable tools and the setting-up of monitoring and assessment systems for transboundary waters. Guidance will also be provided, as appropriate, on issues related to human health and safety. The guidelines will include recommendations to Governments and regional/local authorities and/or institutions of riparian countries.

**Work accomplished:**

Guidelines on monitoring and assessment of transboundary groundwaters (MP.WAT/2000/9), and Guidelines on monitoring and assessing of transboundary rivers (MP.WAT/2000/10).

Main partners:

UNEP, World Meteorological Organization (WMO), World Health Organization (WHO), United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), European Environment Agency (EEA) and its relevant topic centers, and joint bodies set up under transboundary water agreements in Europe.

### **3.1.1 Monitoring and assessment of international lakes**

Work to be undertaken:

*Finalize guidelines on monitoring and assessment of international lakes, including background documentation, for consideration and adoption by the Working Group on Monitoring and Assessment, and examination and endorsement by the Parties to the Convention at their third meeting (Spain, 2003).*

Lead Party: Finland.

### **3.1.2 Monitoring and assessment of transboundary estuaries**

Work to be undertaken:

*Prepare – as a first step - a working document on monitoring and assessment of estuaries - for consideration at third meeting of the Working Group - that will contain a preliminary inventory of transboundary estuaries in the UNECE region, an overview of assessment methods, and a preliminary compilation of literature references.*

Lead Party: Finland.

### **3.1.3 Updating of the Guidelines on monitoring and assessment of transboundary waters**

Work to be undertaken:

The Guidelines on monitoring and assessing *transboundary waters* will be updated, if need be, in the light of experience gained with pilot projects (see programme element 3.2), technological advances, economic and social factors, *major policy developments* as well as changes in scientific knowledge and understanding.

*A Core Group will draw up a strategy document that will outline the future work on guidelines, among other things the need to revise the guidelines, for finalization by the Working Group and submission to the Parties for consideration at their third meeting.*

Lead Parties: Finland will lead the Core Group.

### **3.2 Pilot programmes on monitoring and assessment**

#### **Objectives:**

Through pilot programmes, the Meeting of the Parties will provide assistance to countries to implement the Guidelines on monitoring and assessment of transboundary waters in a number of catchment areas to illustrate the application of the Guidelines, and to make possible adjustments/improvements to them. The implementation of the Guidelines through the pilot programmes will be supported by an advisory service, training and workshops (if necessary). *Experience gained in the pilot programme will contribute to the revision of the guidelines. The pilot programme will also take into account aspects of the EC Water Framework Directive related to monitoring and assessment of transboundary waters.*

**Main partners:** Donor countries (Parties and non-Parties) and donor organizations/institutions; joint bodies set up under transboundary water agreements in Europe.

#### **3.2.1 Pilot programme on transboundary rivers**

##### **Ongoing work:**

Pilot programme on eight transboundary rivers including the rivers Bug (Belarus, Poland, Ukraine), Ipoly (Hungary, Slovakia), Kura (Azerbaijan, Georgia), Latoritca/Uzh (Slovakia, Ukraine), Maros (Hungary, Romania), Morava (Czech Republic, Slovakia), Serverski Donets (Russian Federation, Ukraine) and Tobol (Kazakhstan, Russian Federation).

##### **Work to be undertaken:**

Overall supervision and project management by the Core Group on Pilot Projects. Evaluation of the pilot projects on transboundary rivers at the next *meetings* of the Working Group.

**Lead Party:** Netherlands.

##### **Work-sharing arrangements:**

Memorandums of understanding or other arrangements have been made among the riparian countries participating in the various projects.

#### **3.2.2 Pilot programme on transboundary groundwaters**

##### **Work accomplished:**

Guidelines on monitoring and assessment of transboundary groundwaters (MP.WAT/2000/9).

##### **Work to be undertaken:**

*Draw up a preparatory study, and on the basis of this study, draft a working programme for the implementation of the groundwater guidelines; to start pilot projects and participate in the TARM programme.*

Lead Party: Netherlands.

Main partners: WHO, UNESCO, FAO, regional commissions of the UN system, and IAH.

### **3.2.3 Pilot programme on international lakes**

#### Work accomplished:

See the objectives and work to be undertaken in programme element 3.1.1.

#### Work to be undertaken:

Given that the pilot programme could start in 2001/2002, project preparation, overall supervision and project management will be carried out after the completion of programme element 3.1.1.

Lead Party: Finland.

### **3.3 Laboratory quality management**

#### Objectives:

Following the overall objective of the programme element (see work plan 1997-2000 in ECE/MP.WAT/2, annex II), an expert group with Hungary as lead country started its activities on laboratory quality management and accreditation. Based on the outcome of the meeting of this group on 20 and 21 December 1999, the Meeting of the Parties invited the core group to finalize the draft guidelines on laboratory quality management presented to it at its second meeting as background information for the forthcoming meeting of the Working Group on Monitoring and Assessment.

#### Work accomplished:

*Technical report: Guidance on the operation of water-quality laboratories adopted at the second meeting of the Working Group.*

#### Work to be undertaken:

*Publication of the technical report on the web site of the International Water Assessment Centre (IWAC).*

Lead Party: Hungary and the Netherlands.

#### Note

a/ Amendments are given in italics. The updated programme is subject to approval by the Bureau of the Meeting of the Parties at its meeting early 2002.