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

REPORT OF THE THIRD MEETING OF THE PARTIES

The Parties to the Convention held their third meeting in Madrid on 26-28 November 2003. Recognizing the important role played by the Convention in the establishment and development of transboundary cooperation, the promotion of peace and security and sustainable water management, the Parties decided to open up the possibility of acceding to the Convention also to countries outside the UNECE region. The Parties considered that the ratification of the Convention by more UNECE member countries, in particular by countries in South-Eastern Europe and in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia (EECCA), and its practical application were priorities. They also recognized the importance of implementation projects and capacity-building activities to assist countries in their efforts to apply the Convention in practice. Finally, they reviewed the implementation of the activities under its auspices and took decisions on the programme of work and the resources under the Convention for 2004-2006.

Introduction

1. The third meeting of the Parties to the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes (Water Convention) was held in Madrid from 26 to 28 November 2003 at the invitation of the Government of Spain.
2. The meeting was attended by delegations from the following Parties to the Convention: Albania, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Belgium, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Kazakhstan, Latvia, Netherlands, Portugal, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and the European Community. It was also attended by Bulgaria, which had ratified the Convention less than 90 days before and thus was not yet a Party.
3. The following countries, which had not yet ratified the Convention, attended the meeting: Georgia, Malta, Serbia and Montenegro, Turkey, United Kingdom and Uzbekistan.
4. The Conference of the Parties to the Convention on the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents (Industrial Accidents Convention) was represented by its Chairman, Mr. Ernst Berger (Switzerland).
5. Representatives of the following organizations and institutions also participated: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO); World Bank; International Water Assessment Centre (IWAC), established under the Water Convention; World Health Organization's Collaborating Centre of the for Health Promoting Water Management and Risk Communication; DHI Water and Environment, Denmark; Global Water Partnership; Regional Environmental Center for Central and Eastern Europe; Regional Environmental Center Moldova; and Peipsi Centre for Transboundary Cooperation.
6. Mr. Carel de Villeneuve (Netherlands), Chairman, opened the meeting.
7. Mr. Pascual Fernández Martínez (Spain), State Secretary for Water and Coastal Areas (Spain), made an opening statement on behalf of the host country. He particularly highlighted the challenges for the Parties of implementing recent decisions by Heads of State or Government, such as those taken at the World Summit on Sustainable Development of relevance to transboundary waters, and underlined the commitment of the Spanish Government to assisting other Parties and the secretariat in implementing the Convention's future activities. Mr. C. de Villeneuve, addressed the Meeting recalling the main achievements of the past three years. Mr. Kaj Bärlund, Director, United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), made a statement on behalf of UNECE, which carried out the secretariat functions for the Convention. These opening statements were circulated to delegations and were posted on the Water Convention's web site.
8. Mr. E. Berger addressed the Meeting on 27 November. Representatives of the following delegations also made opening statements: Austria, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Czech Republic, Hungary, Latvia, Republic of Moldova, Russian Federation, Serbia and Montenegro, Slovakia, and the European Community. The statements submitted to the secretariat were posted on the Convention's web site.
9. The Meeting agreed to take them all into account when considering the various agenda items, in particular the Declaration of Madrid and the 2004-2006 work plan.

I. OPENING CEREMONY AND CONSTITUTION

A. Adoption of the agenda

10. The Meeting of the Parties adopted its agenda as set out in document ECE/MP.WAT/13.

B. Opening statements by the host authority and other delegations

11. The Meeting of the Parties welcomed the statements made by the Parties and observers and agreed to take them into account when considering the corresponding items of the agenda.

C. Constitution of the third meeting of the Parties

12. The third meeting of the Parties was chaired by Mr. C. de Villeneuve and co-chaired by Mr. Manuel Varela (Spain), who had been elected Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson, respectively, at the end of the second meeting (ECE/MP.WAT/5).

13. The Meeting of the Parties took note of the report of the officers that the credentials submitted by the Parties to the Convention were in good order.

14. The Meeting of the Parties established three ad hoc groups: one on the draft work plan, chaired by Mrs. Sybille Vermont (Switzerland), the second on the draft declaration, chaired by Mr. M. Varela, and the third on the draft decision to amend articles 25 and 26 of the Convention, chaired by Mr. Juerg Bally (Switzerland).

II. PROTOCOL ON CIVIL LIABILITY

15. Mrs. Phani Daskalopoulou-Livada (Greece), Chairperson of the Intergovernmental Working Group on Civil Liability, and Mr. E. Berger reported on the successful drawing-up and adoption of the Protocol on Civil Liability and Compensation for Damage Caused by the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents on Transboundary Waters (MP.WAT/2003/1 - CP.TEIA/2003/3) by the governing bodies of the Water Convention and the Industrial Accidents Convention at their second joint special session on the occasion of the fifth Ministerial Conference "Environment for Europe" (Kiev, 23 May 2003).

16. Recalling the decisions taken at that special session, Mrs. Ph. Daskalopoulou-Livada also indicated areas of possible future cooperation to promote the Protocol, including raising awareness and the demand-driven provision of guidance in the ratification process. She underlined the importance of encouraging countries to ratify as the value and strength of the Protocol would increase with the number of ratifications.

17. In the ensuing discussion, the Meeting considered ways and means of assisting, jointly with the Conference of the Parties to the Industrial Accidents Convention, in the interim implementation of the Protocol on Civil Liability, and agreed on a new programme element in its 2004-2006 work plan.

III. PROTOCOL ON WATER AND HEALTH

18. On the basis of the report by the Chairman of the Working Group on Water and Health, Mr. Mihaly Kadar (Hungary), the Meeting considered the outcome of the first and second meetings of the Signatories to the Protocol on Water and Health (MP.WAT/AC.2/2000/2 and MP.WAT/AC.2/2003/2) as well as the achievements of the Working Group.

19. The Meeting took note of the information on the status of ratification and progress made in implementing the Protocol's provisions, pending its entry into force, which was provided by countries at the present meeting of the Parties to the Convention and at the second meeting of the Signatories to the Protocol on Water and Health (Geneva, 2-4 July 2003). The Meeting concluded that, given the current status of ratification and the countries' target dates for ratification, the first meeting of the Parties to the Protocol could be convened in spring 2005. It reconfirmed the Working Group's role in the preparation of the first Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol (see 2004-2006 work plan), including the submission of information about achievements under the Protocol to the fourth Ministerial Conference on Environment and Health (Budapest, 23-25 June 2004). The Meeting also took note of the proposal of the delegation of Hungary to host a consultation of countries that had signed/ratified the Protocol on 22 June 2004.

20. To promote harmonious cooperation with the Meeting of the Signatories to the Protocol on Water and Health and to assist the Working Group on Water and Health in the preparation of the first meeting of the Parties to the Protocol, the Meeting of the Parties to the Convention:

(a) Recommended the Signatories to raise the level of participants from the health sector in meetings of the Signatories to senior official level;

(b) Called upon Signatories that acted as lead or participating countries to fully commit themselves to the implementation of the respective work plan elements;

(c) Invited the Signatories which had not yet done so to participate in the meetings and activities of the Working Group on Water and Health;

(d) Noting the need for financial and human resources for the Protocol's implementation, invited the Signatories to consider making contributions to a trust fund to be established under the Protocol or making earmarked contributions to the Water Convention's trust fund (see chap. IX).

IV. AMENDMENT TO THE CONVENTION

21. The Meeting considered the proposal by Switzerland to amend article 25 of the Convention on ratification, acceptance, approval and accession (see MP.WAT/2003/4), which was communicated by the Executive Secretary of UNECE to the Parties to the Convention in August 2003.

22. In the ensuing discussion, the Parties to the Convention acknowledged the value that participation of countries outside the UNECE region, in particular those that share waters with countries in the UNECE region, could add to cooperation under the Convention, and expressed their intention to support the Swiss proposal. The Meeting agreed to establish an ad hoc group to finalize work on a draft decision prepared by Switzerland. The ad hoc group suggested to the Meeting to also amend article 26.

23. The delegation of Turkey, non-Party to the Convention, expressed the view that the proposed amendment was not in line with the purposes and geographical coverage of the Convention, which should remain a strictly regional instrument.

24. The Parties adopted the amendment to the Convention on 28 November 2003 by consensus (see decision III/1 in ECE/MP.WAT/14).

V. IMPLEMENTATION AND COMPLIANCE

25. Referring to her report on civil liability (see chap. II), the Chairperson of the Working Group on Legal and Administrative Aspects, Mrs. Ph. Daskalopoulou-Livada, and the secretariat reported on the achievements under other work plan elements, including activities under the Advisory Network on Legal Instruments, established by the Parties at their second meeting (MP.WAT/2003/5).

26. The Meeting noted with appreciation the work done by the outgoing Chairperson of the Working Group. It also took note of the progress in the drawing-up of a draft compliance regime under the Protocol on Water and Health, based on a working paper prepared by a consultant. The Meeting made arrangements for future activities on legal issues (see work plan). It also decided to establish an open-ended Legal Board in order to assist the Bureau and other bodies under the Convention on legal issues (see decision III/3, ECE/MP.WAT/15/Add.1).

27. As to the Advisory Network, the Meeting decided to extend the activities of this body to institutional, economic, financial and technical aspects (see terms of reference of the Advisory Service in ECE/MP.WAT/15/Add.1). The Meeting invited the Parties to nominate national experts for the Advisory Service, noting that past experience had shown that the number of requests for assistance called for a substantial increase in the number of experts.

VI. INTEGRATED MANAGEMENT OF WATER AND RELATED ECOSYSTEMS

28. The Meeting noted with appreciation the report of the outgoing Chairman of the Working Group on Water Management, Mr. Milan Matushka (Slovakia), on the achievements under the work plan 2000-2003 (MP.WAT/2003/5). It evaluated the opportunity for establishing a new working group with a broader mandate regarding integrated water resources management, and examined the proposals by the Working Group for activities under the 2004-2006 draft work plan (MP.WAT/2003/6). It agreed to make the necessary arrangements when discussing the work plan for 2004-2006.

A. Second International Conference on Sustainable Management of Transboundary Waters in Europe and other meetings

29. The Meeting expressed its sincere thanks to the Government of Poland for having hosted the second International Conference on Sustainable Management of Transboundary Waters in Europe (Miedzyzdroje, Poland, 21-24 April 2002) and the Governments of Finland, Germany and the Netherlands for their support. It endorsed the conclusions and recommendations of the Conference (ECE/MP.WAT/8), which had already been examined by the Working Group on Water Management. It also drew attention to the Conference Proceedings and the Water Convention's web site, and appreciated the work undertaken by the members of the editorial board from Finland, the Netherlands, Poland and the secretariat to prepare and publish them.

30. A delegate from Poland informed the Meeting of Poland's intention to host the third International Conference in 2007.

B. Workshop on approaches and tools for river basin management

31. The Meeting took note of the recommendations of the workshop on approaches and tools for river basin management: experience drawn from the implementation of the EU Water Framework Directive (MP.WAT/WG.1/2001/8) and agreed to consider possible follow-up activities when discussing the work plan.

32. The Meeting, recalling the above report by the Chairman of the Working Group on Water Management, noted that the Working Group also supervised other workshops and expressed its thanks to all countries that had taken the lead in, or contributed to, these activities.

C. Bilateral and multilateral cooperation on transboundary waters in the newly independent States

33. The Meeting endorsed the outcome of the project "Transboundary water cooperation in the newly independent States" carried out, at the request of the Russian Federation, by UNECE with the United Nations Environment Programme/Regional Office for Europe, the Ministry for Natural Resources of the Russian Federation, the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency and the Agency for Environmental Assessments "Ecoterra". The project had identified measures for strengthening bilateral and multilateral cooperation. Based on this analysis, a follow-up activity was proposed for the work plan under the Convention. The Meeting agreed to consider the proposal when discussing the work plan for 2004-2006.

D. Inter-State distribution of water resources of transboundary watercourses

34. The Meeting noted with appreciation the work undertaken by the Russian Federation on the inter-State distribution of water resources of transboundary watercourses (MP.WAT/2003/8). In the ensuing discussion, delegations made proposals for possible follow-up activities, including water saving and its link to pollution prevention. Moreover, a pilot project to implement the principles, approaches and recommendations made in the above document, for example in the Tobol basin shared by Kazakhstan and the Russian Federation, was proposed. It could become part of the Action Programme on integrated water resources management (see chap. VIII).

35. The Meeting agreed with the principles, approaches and recommendations on the inter-State distribution of waters set out in the above document and requested the secretariat to make this report widely available. In this respect, the Meeting noted that arrangements had been made by the Russian Federation and the secretariat to present the outcome of the project at the forthcoming All-Russian Congress on Water Management (9-10 December 2003). The Meeting also agreed that follow-up activities should be considered by the new Working Group on Integrated Water Resources Management (see programme element 2.4 of the 2004-2006 work plan).

E. Flood prevention, protection and mitigation

36. The Meeting noted with satisfaction the information provided by the delegation of Germany that the Guidelines on Sustainable Flood Prevention (MP.WAT/2000/7, annex), adopted at the second meeting, had been the basis for the recently launched best practice document on flood prevention, protection and mitigation drawn up under the auspices of the

Water Directors of the European Union. The Meeting recalled its decision to assess the experience with the application of these Guidelines at its fourth meeting (ECE/MP.WAT/5, para. 27; and annex I, para. 12).

37. The Meeting welcomed with appreciation the proposal by Germany to hold an international seminar on flood prevention, protection and mitigation to share the experience in the application of the Guidelines and review them, as appropriate, in Berlin on 21-22 June 2004. The Meeting also agreed to explore options, including the possibility of drawing up a legal instrument under the Convention, for further developing and strengthening a common framework for flood protection, prevention and mitigation (see the work plan for further details).

38. To prepare the seminar and draw up options for future activities on flood issues, the delegation of Germany offered to lead an open-ended task force, whose first meeting would take place on 19-20 January 2004. Hungary expressed its readiness to explore the possibility of hosting its second meeting in Budapest.¹ Referring to the work plan, “[...] with a view to presenting appropriate proposals to the Meeting of the Parties for discussion and possible adoption”, the secretariat clarified that this was to be understood as any meeting of the Parties to the Convention which might be convened between now and 2006, including the fourth ordinary meeting in June 2006.

F. Water and industrial accidents

39. The Meeting took note with appreciation of the report of the Chairman of the Conference of the Parties to the Industrial Accidents Convention on the activities of the joint ad hoc expert group on water and industrial accidents, established under the Water Convention and the Industrial Accidents Convention (see CP.TEIA/2002/11 and the minutes of the first to fifth meetings of the expert group, posted on the Convention’s web site). It agreed to take the conclusions and recommendations of the above documents into account in the further joint work, and agreed to update the work plan element on water and industrial accidents accordingly.

VII. MONITORING AND ASSESSMENT OF TRANSBOUNDARY WATERS

40. The Meeting noted with appreciation the report of the Chairperson of the Working Group on Monitoring and Assessment, Mrs. Lea Kauppi (Finland), on the achievements under the 2000-2003 work plan (MP.WAT/2003/5) and examined the proposals by the Working Group for activities under the 2004-2006 draft work plan (MP.WAT/2003/6/Add.1). The Meeting agreed to take the proposals into account when discussing the work plan.

A. Guidelines on monitoring and assessment of transboundary waters

41. The Chairman of the Core Group on Lakes, Mr. Pertti Heinonen (Finland), presented the guidelines on monitoring and assessment of transboundary and international lakes as well as the background paper with information on general properties and monitoring practices of 21 transboundary/international lakes in the UNECE region (MP.WAT/2003/10). The guidelines, which consisted of two parts (part A: strategy document and part B: technical guidelines), and the background paper were available on the Water Convention’s web site². Mr. P. Heinonen also illustrated how the experience gained with these guidelines would be used in future work to

¹ After the meeting of the Parties, the delegation of Hungary informed the secretariat that the second meeting of the task force was scheduled to be held in Budapest on 26-27 April 2004.

² See <http://www.unece.org/env/water/publications/pub74.htm>

provide strategic and technical guidance for the monitoring and assessment of transboundary waters.

42. The Meeting of the Parties:

(a) Endorsed the Guidelines on Monitoring and Assessment of Transboundary and International Lakes and welcomed the background paper;

(b) Invited the Parties and non-Parties to the Convention to apply these Guidelines in the framework of cooperation on transboundary water management and, as far as appropriate, in the national context;

(c) Invited Finland together with the secretariat to translate and publish the Guidelines in Russian;

(d) Decided to take into account the proposal to draw up a new generation of guidelines on monitoring and assessment of transboundary waters when discussing the work plan for 2004-2006;

(e) Congratulated the members of the Core Group on Lakes and the other members of the Working Group on Monitoring and Assessment for their excellent work; and

(f) Expressed its gratitude to the Government of Finland for the provision of human and financial resources to the Core Group.

43. The Meeting also took note of the results on the survey on the experience of Parties and non-Parties with the implementation of the Guidelines on Monitoring and Assessment of Transboundary Rivers and the Guidelines on Monitoring and Assessment of Transboundary Groundwaters (MP.WAT/2003/9), carried out according to a decision taken at the second meeting of the Parties (ECE/MP.WAT/5, para. 37 (e) and (f)). The Meeting decided to take the conclusions of the survey into account when discussing such items of the work plan as future guidelines on monitoring and assessment of transboundary waters, compliance with decisions of the Meeting of the Parties, and increasing the visibility of the products developed under the Water Convention.

B. Pilot programme on transboundary waters

44. The Meeting was informed by Mr. P. Heinonen of the progress of the pilot programme on the transboundary lakes, i.e. Lake Peipsi (Estonia/Russian Federation) and Lake Pyhäjärvi (Finland/Russian Federation). The three major aims of the pilot project were: (a) to implement and test the Guidelines on Monitoring and Assessment of Transboundary and International Lakes; (b) to investigate how cost-effective monitoring programmes could be developed to fulfil the obligations of the EU Water Framework Directive; and (c) to improve and harmonize the reporting practices on the state of the environment using modern information technologies (MP.WAT/2003/5 and 10).

45. The Meeting was also informed of the progress of the pilot programme on transboundary groundwaters covering the Aggtelek - Slovak Karst (Hungary-Slovakia) and part of the groundwaters in the Bug basin (Belarus-Poland) (MP.WAT/2003/5).

46. Mr. John Chilton (British Geological Survey), Chairman of the Core Group on River Pilot Projects, reported on the progress in the projects on the rivers Bug, Latoritza/Uhz, Ipoly, Morava and Mures/Maros. The Meeting noted with satisfaction that the final reports on

recommendations for improving monitoring and assessment activities for the rivers Bug, Morava and Mures/Maros had been printed, and that the reports for the rivers Ipoly and Latoritza/Uhz were being finalized. The Meeting was also informed of the completion of the Tacis projects on the rivers Kura, Pripyat, Severski Donets and Tobol.

47. With the finalization of the above “recommendations reports” and the end of the Tacis projects, the pilot programme on transboundary rivers had achieved the objectives and goals of the preparatory phase; the Core Group on River Pilot Projects therefore called for the Meeting’s support in the future implementation phase, in particular to foster cooperation and attract political support.

48. The delegation of Serbia and Montenegro announced that it would start a pilot project on the River Sava, which could become part of the work plan for 2004-2006.

49. The Meeting agreed to make the necessary arrangements for the future of the pilot projects programme when discussing the work plan for 2004-2006.

50. The Meeting also examined the “lessons learned” with the pilot projects on the rivers Bug, Ipoly, Latorica/Uzh, Morava and Mures/Maros (MP.WAT/2003/11) derived from an evaluation exercise, carried out by the projects’ participants, who had reviewed the different phases of the projects and their major advantages and shortcomings, had developed recommendations for future pilot projects (including pilot projects on lakes and groundwaters, and the implementation phase of the river pilot projects) and had drawn up proposals for the next generation of guidelines on monitoring and assessment of transboundary waters.

51. The Meeting congratulated the members of the three Core Groups on the pilot projects for rivers, lakes and groundwaters for their excellent work, and expressed its gratitude to the Governments of Finland and the Netherlands for the provision of human and financial resources to the Core Groups.

C. International Water Assessment Centre (IWAC)

52. Mr. Wim Cofino, Director of IWAC, presented a review of IWAC’s activities since the second meeting of the Parties and introduced its revised mandate (MP.WAT/2003/12). The delegation of the Netherlands informed the Meeting of the intention of its Government to continue hosting and supporting IWAC; however, its financial contributions would be substantially lower than in the past three years.

53. The Meeting of the Parties:

(a) Requested the Director of IWAC in consultation with the IWAC Steering Group, to draw up a revised plan of activities for the Centre, including the IWAC contribution to the indicator development for the second edition of the World Water Assessment Report. This revised plan should include an assessment of the human and financial resources;

(b) Invited the Parties to make voluntary contributions to the IWAC activities;

(c) Requested the new Bureau to supervise the implementation of the revised plan of activities.

VIII. PARTNERS IN COOPERATION: LINKS WITH OTHER SECTORS AND PROGRAMMES

A. Environmental partnerships in the UNECE region

1. Partnership on water for sustainable development

54. The secretariat presented the Action Programme for the development of integrated management of transboundary waters in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia (EECCA). The aims of the Action Programme were: (a) to contribute to the development of transboundary cooperation on integrated water resource management; (b) to improve coordination, cooperation and exchange of experience between countries, stakeholders and projects; (c) to identify and support the fund-raising for new activities on issues not covered by planned or ongoing activities; (d) to establish realistic objectives for the development of EECCA subregional transboundary water cooperation in 2004-2006; and (e) to establish a framework to make it possible to identify progress in transboundary water cooperation in EECCA.

55. The Action Programme was a contribution to the “Strategic Partnership on Water for Sustainable Development”, which had been launched at the World Summit on Sustainable Development by the EU and the 12 EECCA countries. It covered: (a) urban water supply and sanitation, including work on innovative financing mechanisms for water infrastructure (to be implemented under the auspices of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development); and (b) water resources management, including transboundary river basin and regional seas issues (to be implemented under the auspices of UNECE). At the same time, the Action Programme would be included in the work programme under the Convention in programme element 2.4 “Integrated management of transboundary waters in EECCA”, in particular through a series of seminars on transboundary water cooperation for EECCA countries.

56. The Meeting endorsed the Action Programme, decided to actively participate in the implementation and further development of the “Strategic Partnership on Water for Sustainable Development” (see Declaration of Madrid) and agreed to make the necessary arrangements when discussing the work plan for 2004-2006.

57. The secretariat informed the Meeting that the implementation of activities linked to the Strategic Partnership and the Environment Strategy (see below) would require more secretariat resources. The need for human and financial resources, including resources for activities on integrated water resources management in a non-transboundary context, would be further analysed and set out in a revised version of the Action Programme. This updated and revised Programme would be submitted to the second high-level meeting on the Partnership³ for consideration and further action.

2. Environment strategy for countries in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia

58. The Meeting agreed to participate actively in the further development of the Environment Strategy for the EECCA countries (see Declaration of Madrid) as regards the component on integrated management of water resources (see documents of the Kiev Ministerial Conference “Environment for Europe”, ECE/CEP/94/Rev.1 and ECE/CEP/105/Rev.1) in particular through its new Working Group on Integrated Water Resources Management.

3 The second high-level meeting will take place in Moscow on 26-27 February 2004. The updated and revised Action Programme will be introduced at that meeting by the Chairperson of the Working Group on Integrated Water Resources Management, Mrs. S. Vermont.

B. Regional follow-up to the World Summit on Sustainable Development and preparations for the next session of the Commission on Sustainable Development

59. The Meeting took note of the report, drawn up by the secretariat with the assistance of a consultant, on the assessment of the achievements of the countries in the UNECE region regarding the decisions and recommendations of the 1992 Rio Conference, the Johannesburg Declaration on Sustainable Development and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation related to water and sanitation (ECE/AC.25/2004/5 and Add. 1 to Add. 3) which would be considered at the first Regional Implementation Forum on Sustainable Development in Geneva on 15-16 January 2004.

60. The participants agreed to request their country representatives to provide the Forum with examples of the role of the Water Convention and its protocols in solving water and sanitation problems in the region. The Meeting invited its new Bureau to participate in the Forum and take steps regarding the preparations for the 12th session of the Commission on Sustainable Development and its follow-up.

C. Cooperation with the governing bodies of multilateral environmental agreements, other United Nations bodies, and other partners

61. The Chairman informed the Meeting about the consultations held under the auspices of the UNECE Committee on Environmental Policy with the Bureaux of the UNECE environmental conventions (see CEP/2003/24). The Meeting took note of this information and agreed that its new Bureau should continue cooperating with the above partners, particularly on cross-cutting issues related to the implementation of decisions taken at the Kiev Ministerial Conference.

62. The Meeting also invited its new Bureau to seek opportunities for deepening cooperation with: (a) UNESCO and other United Nations organizations on the preparation of the second edition of the World Water Development Report to be issued in 2006 (see also chap. VII and its sect. C); (b) the governing body of the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance Especially as Waterfowl Habitat (Ramsar Convention) regarding the ecosystem approach in water management; (c) the governing body of the Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and Their Disposal (Basel Convention) regarding civil liability; and (d) the Global Water Partnership regarding integrated water resources management.

IX. WORK PLAN UNTIL THE FOURTH MEETING OF THE PARTIES (2004-2006)

63. The Meeting endorsed: (a) the work plan, finalized by its ad hoc group on the basis of the relevant meeting documents discussed under the various items of the agenda; (b) the terms of reference and composition of its Bureau; and (c) the terms of reference of the Working Groups (see ECE/MP.WAT/15/Add.1 and Add.2).

64. The Meeting noted with appreciation the readiness of Parties to take a lead in, or contribute to, the programme's implementation. It invited other Parties and non-Parties to consider nominating representatives for the various working groups and programme elements; the list of contributing Parties and non-Parties in the work plan would remain open-ended.

65. The Meeting examined ways and means of facilitating the attendance of representatives of countries with economies in transition in future meetings under the Convention, and agreed to

strengthen secretariat services (e.g. assisting in the preparation of studies, servicing meetings outside Geneva, participating in meetings organized by other organizations with which it had decided to cooperate, holding consultations with Parties on other matters linked to the implementation of the Convention, and public relations).

66. In order to ensure the smooth management of voluntary contributions to implement the work plan, the Meeting established a trust fund and invited Parties and non-Parties to consider making contributions to it (see decision III/2, ECE/MP.WAT/15/Add.1). In this regard, the Meeting noted the statement by the secretariat that during an informal meeting with potential donors, held on 27 November, several Governments had already pledged voluntary contributions to the Convention's trust fund.

X. THE DECLARATION OF MADRID

67. On the basis of a draft text (MP.WAT/2003/14), which was finalized by the respective ad hoc group, the Meeting adopted its Declaration of Madrid, which sets out the Convention's major medium- and long-term goals (ECE/MP.WAT/15/Add.1). Particular account was taken of the challenges put forward at the 2003 Ministerial Conference "Environment for Europe".

XI. ELECTION OF OFFICERS FOR THE FOURTH MEETING OF THE PARTIES

68. Following a proposal by the Bureau, the Meeting of the Parties unanimously elected the officers for the new Bureau (see decision III/3, ECE/MP.WAT/15/Add.1).

69. The Meeting of the Parties expressed its great appreciation and gratitude to the outgoing Chairman, Mr. C. de Villeneuve, for the services that he had provided during his chairmanship. His able leadership had contributed to the success of the work under the Convention. The Parties also expressed their appreciation and thanks to the Chairpersons of the Working Groups, Mrs. Ph. Daskalopoulou-Livada, Mr. M. Matuska, Mrs. L. Kauppi and Mr. M. Kadar, for their excellent work for the meetings of the Parties and the bodies established under the Convention.

XII. DATE AND VENUE OF THE FOURTH MEETING OF THE PARTIES

70. The Meeting welcomed with appreciation the offer of the Government of Germany to host the fourth ordinary meeting of the Parties in Berlin in June 2006.

XIII. ADOPTION OF THE REPORT

71. The Meeting of the Parties adopted the report of its third meeting on the basis of a draft prepared by the secretariat in consultation with the Chairman and Vice-Chairman.

XIV. CLOSING OF THE MEETING

72. The Meeting of the Parties commended the secretariat for its excellent and productive work and the high quality of the documents.

73. On behalf of the participants, the delegations of the Netherlands and the Russian Federation thanked the Government of Spain and the host of the meeting, the Spanish Ministry of Environment, for the excellent arrangements that had been made and for the cordial hospitality extended to them during the meeting. The participants expressed their gratitude for the financial assistance provided by Germany, Italy, Spain and Switzerland to enable representatives of countries in transition as well as NGOs to attend the meeting, to provide interpreters and to cover the participation of secretariat staff.

74. Mr. Juan Manuel Aragonés Beltrán (Spain), Director General, Obras Hidráulicas y Calidad de las Aguas, closed the meeting.