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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**

Fourth meeting
Bonn (Germany), 20–22 November 2006
Item 7 (a) of the provisional agenda

**STRATEGIES FOR MONITORING AND ASSESSMENT OF TRANSBOUNDARY
RIVERS, LAKES AND GROUNDWATERS***

Note by the secretariat

1. At their third meeting, the Parties agreed to include in their workplan 2004-2006 activities related to both strategic and technical guidance on monitoring and assessment of transboundary waters. Following this decision, the Working Group on Monitoring and Assessment prepared the *Strategies for Monitoring and Assessment of Transboundary Rivers, Lakes and Groundwaters* which are presented under separate cover (ECE/MP.WAT/20).¹
2. The *Strategies* are based on the *Guidelines on Monitoring and Assessment of Transboundary Groundwaters* (MP.WAT/2000/9), the *Guidelines on Monitoring and Assessment of Transboundary Rivers* (MP.WAT/2000/10), and the *Guidelines on Monitoring and Assessment of Transboundary and International Lakes* (MP.WAT/2003/10), already developed by the Working Group on Monitoring and Assessment, and on the experience with their implementation in pilot projects, most noticeably in countries in Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia.

* This document was submitted on the above date because of processing delays.

¹ For the technical guidance, see document ECE/MP.WAT/2006/13.

3. The *Strategies* also build on the results of workshops, training courses and other capacity-building activities carried out under the Convention, in particular the workshop under the project Capacity for Water Cooperation on joint monitoring and assessment of shared water basins, including early warning and alarm systems, which was held in Tbilisi from 31 October to 2 November 2005.²

4. Contrary to the previous guidelines, the *Strategies* do not cover technical aspects of monitoring and assessment but only deal with strategic ones, while practical examples and good practices can be found in the report of the CWC workshop.

5. The *Strategies* explain the key principles of and approaches to monitoring and assessment of transboundary watercourses. They highlight areas of interest to policy and decision makers and provide ground rules for representatives of joint bodies and for water managers involved in or responsible for establishing and carrying out cooperation between riparian countries. The *Strategies* stress the underlying legal, administrative and financial aspects of monitoring and assessment and discuss the constraints on and opportunities for cooperation.

6. The *Strategies* particularly highlight two important concepts: monitoring and assessment should be tailored to the specificities of the river basin, and a phased approach should be used when setting up these systems. Furthermore, as agreed at the third meeting of the Parties, the *Strategies* take into account the requirements of the EU Water Framework Directive, put special emphasis on institutional arrangements, promote an integrated basin approach embracing rivers, lakes, groundwaters, transitional and coastal waters, and address extreme events and climate change effects, as well as human health requirements.

7. The *Strategies* were prepared by a drafting group entrusted with this task by the Working Group on Monitoring and Assessment. The drafting group was composed of Ms. Sirkka Haunia and Mr. Pertti Heinonen from the Finnish Environment Institute; Mr. John Chilton from the British Geological Survey; Mr. Jos Timmerman from the Dutch Institute for Inland Water Management and Waste Water Treatment; Mr. Rafiq Verdyev from the non-governmental organization ECORES (Azerbaijan); and Ms. Francesca Bernardini and Mr. Rainer Enderlein from the UNECE secretariat.

8. At its seventh meeting, the Working Group on Monitoring and Assessment endorsed the *Strategies* and entrusted the secretariat to submit them to the Parties for consideration and adoption at their fourth meeting.

9. The Meeting of the Parties may wish to:

(a) Adopt the *Strategies for Monitoring and Assessment of Transboundary Rivers, Lakes and Groundwaters* (which are presented under separate cover under symbol ECE/MP.WAT/20);

² See http://www.unece.org/env/water/cwc/monit_assess.htm

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

(c) Request the Working Group on Monitoring and Assessment, with the assistance of the International Water Assessment Center, to promote the implementation of the *Strategies*, including through the development of capacity-building and awareness raising activities;

(d) Decide to consider at its sixth meeting the need for updating the *Strategies* on the basis of the experience gained in their implementation;

(e) Commend the members of the drafting group and the other members of Working Group on Monitoring and Assessment for their excellent work;

(f) Express its gratitude to the Government of Finland for its support to this activity.