

**Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary
Watercourses and International Lakes**



BUREAU/2011/1
7 February 2011

BUREAU OF THE MEETING OF THE PARTIES

Fourteenth meeting
Geneva, 9 March 2011

ANNOTATED PROVISIONAL AGENDA FOR THE FOURTEENTH MEETING

Prepared by the secretariat

The fourteenth meeting of the Bureau of the Water Convention will take place in the Palais des Nations in room XV. It will be held on 9 March from 9 a.m. to 5.00 p.m. It will be preceded by a joint session of the Water Convention Bureau together with the Bureau of the Protocol on Water and Health, to be held on 8 March from 1. p.m. until 5.30 p.m. in the Palais des Nations in room XV (the agenda for this meeting is contained in document JOINT BUREAUX/2011/1). Both meetings will be held in English.

Bureau members should be in possession of a long-duration badge to enter the Palais des Nations. If this is not the case please contact: olga.carlos@unece.org.

- 1. Adoption of the agenda**
(8 March, 9.00 - 9.05)
- 2. Implementation of the work plan 2010-2012**
(9.05 - 13.00)
 - (a) Support to implementation and compliance**

The secretariat will inform the Bureau about the progress achieved in the work on a possible future mechanism to facilitate and support implementation and compliance with the Convention, in particular in view of the discussions and decisions at the eighth meeting of the Legal Board (Geneva, 24-25 February 2011).

The secretariat will inform the Bureau on the Legal Board's future work arrangements.

The secretariat will update the Bureau on the outcomes of discussion at the eighth meeting of the Legal Board with regard to the development of the preliminary study on the application of the principles of the Convention to transboundary groundwaters, and future work arrangements in this area.

The secretariat will also inform the Bureau on the capacity-building activities to support efforts to promote the Convention in Central Asia based on the Guide to Implementing the Convention. In this regard, the Bureau will be updated on the outcomes of the national seminars held on 18-19 October 2010 in Kazakhstan and on 6-7 December 2010 in Turkmenistan as well as on the preparatory activities for similar events in Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan to be held in 2011.

The Bureau will be invited to discuss possible activities under the Convention with regard to methodological approaches to defining the minimum stream flow – an issue that was raised during the national seminars.

(b) Status and finalization of the second assessment of transboundary rivers, lakes and groundwaters in the UNECE region

The secretariat will update the Bureau on developments related to the preparation of the second Assessment since the previous session of the Bureau (27-28 September 2010) and the WGMA extraordinary session (14-15 December, Bratislava). The Bureau will be also informed about the results of the subregional workshop for Central Asia (13-15 October, Almaty) and the subregional workshop for Western Europe (8-10 February 2011, Budapest).

The Bureau will be invited to discuss about the next steps with a view to ensuring effective finalization and an appropriate place of the second Assessment on the agenda of the Astana Ministerial Conference. The Bureau will also discuss the preparation of its Executive Summary and agree on the input of the Bureau members to it, taking into account that a small drafting group meeting on the executive summary will be held back-to-back with the Bureau meeting on 10 March 2011.

Finally, the Bureau will continue discussion on the opportunity to develop a third Assessment as well as its possible future characteristics (timeline, specific focus, etc).

(c) Pilot projects on joint monitoring and assessment of transboundary waters, including data management and information exchange

The Bureau will be informed by IWAC about the progress of the project “Strengthening capacity for data administration and exchange for monitoring and assessment of transboundary water resources in Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia” and future plans, including the achievements regarding cooperation with other ongoing initiatives in the basins such as the Dniester III project as the Bureau encouraged at its thirteenth session (27-28 September, Geneva).

(d) Amendments to the Water Convention opening it beyond the region:

Opening the Convention beyond the region is considered one of the strategic areas of future work of the Convention. In this regard, the secretariat will inform the Bureau on the actions taken since the previous Bureau meeting and the future steps in order to ensure entry into force of the amendments by the next session of the Meeting of the Parties in 2012. The Bureau will also continue discussing about how to involve non-UNECE countries in the Convention.

In this regard, the Bureau will discuss the organization of a workshop to be held in June 2011 in Switzerland, with focus on Central Asia and neighbouring non-UNECE countries (Afghanistan, China, Mongolia, Iran and Russia), to exchange experience between UNECE and non-UNECE countries and promote the approach, experience and tools of the Convention to countries outside the region.

The Bureau will also discuss the opportunities to organize other similar workshops on this kind focusing on other sub-regions of the world.

(e) Sharing of experiences and capacity-building, in particular workshop on transboundary groundwater within the Capacity for Water Cooperation (CWC) project

There have been increasing demands for sharing of experience and capacity-building under the Convention. At its previous meeting the Bureau confirmed that the next workshop within the Capacity for Water Cooperation (CWC) project should focus on transboundary groundwaters which could be linked to the second Assessment and support the work on transboundary groundwater under the Legal Board.

The secretariat will inform the Bureau about the activities related to the organization of the workshop. The Bureau members will also recall and review the proposals of the past Bureau meeting for future themes for workshops under the CWC project, which should serve the implementation of the Convention and its products.

(f) Ecosystem services and payments for such services in integrated water resources management

The chairperson will inform the Bureau about the preparations for the workshop on forest and water in low-forest cover regions, to be organized by Switzerland in cooperation with FAO on 7-8 July 2011 in Geneva.

The Chairperson will also inform about the preparatory activities related to a workshop on PES organized in cooperation with the UNECE timber committee on 4-6 July 2011.

The Bureau will discuss additional activities in this area, in particular potential additional pilot projects.

(g) European Union Water Initiative and National Policy Dialogues

The EU Water Initiative National Policy Dialogues on IWRM have become a very successful tool for promoting implementation of the Convention and the Protocol on Water and Health in countries with economies in transition. The NPDs IWRM are implemented in nine countries (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, Republic of Moldova, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan). Governments of the countries where NPDs are implemented expressed their commitments to the process as well as their interest to continue NPDs beyond 2012. Thanks to the support by the Bureau members and their communication to the European Commission, the EC invited the UNECE and OECD to submit a project application for the NPDs continuation until end of 2014; the application has been submitted. Should it be financed, that would allow to initiate a NPD in Kazakhstan too.

The Secretariat will inform the Bureau on the outcome of the project application to the EC, the progress with implementation of the NPDs IWRM and measures taken to address the shortage of staff for implementation of the NPDs. The Bureau will discuss the vision of the future of the Dialogues and agree on further ways and means to ensure appropriate support and continuation of the NPDs.

3. Water and Industrial Accidents

(9 March, 14.30-15.30)

The secretariat will update the Bureau on the next activities of the Joint Ad Hoc Expert Group on Water and Industrial Accidents (JEG), agreed upon in 2010, in particular the development of a checklist for contingency- planning and its testing in a transboundary case.

The Bureau will also be briefed about the relevant outcomes of the sixth Conference of the Parties of the Industrial Accidents Convention (The Hague, 8-10 November 2010) as well as the outcome of the last meeting of the Bureau of the Industrial Accidents Convention.

In accordance with the proposal to develop a checklist/methodology for contingency planning in transboundary context by the JEG, developed by the two secretariats and endorsed by the two Bureaux, the Water Convention Bureau will discuss the co-chair of this activity from the water side as well as the experts to be involved.

Regarding the Civil Liability Protocol it was decided to:

(a) Step 1, to strive to better understand what national legislation was required to implement the Protocol in light of differences between the Protocol and other civil liability instruments;

(b) Step 2, to carry out case studies based on realistic potential accidents to understand the implications including the benefits of implementing the Protocol and/or other instruments; and

(c) Step 3, to identify and recommend actions which would enable the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine to implement the Protocol.

The Bureau will discuss future activities in this area.

The Bureau will be also informed about the activities planned for organizing the workshop at the occasion of the 25th anniversary of the Sandosz accident, to be held in autumn 2011 in Germany.

4. International Water Assessment Centre (IWAC)

(9 March, 15.30-16.00)

Mr. Minarik, director of IWAC, will inform the Bureau about the activities carried out by IWAC, as well as the future plans, including the financial resources available to this end. The Bureau will advise on how IWAC can best support the work under the Convention.

5. Activities related to the 20th anniversary of the Water Convention

(9 March, 16.00-16.30)

In addition to the promotion activities jointly discussed with the Bureau of the Protocol on Water and Health, the Bureau will discuss the opportunity to organize special event or develop specific products in connection with the 20th anniversary of the adoption of the Water Convention in 2012.

6. Resources to implement the workplan and management of the Water Convention's trust fund
(9 March, 16.30-17.00)

On the basis of a report by the secretariat on contributions and expenditures, the Bureau will overview the management of the Water Convention's trust fund and take appropriate action to raise missing funds for the National Policy Dialogues, the promotional activities, the CWC project and especially the new activities on water and industrial accidents, according to the Bureau's mandate (see decision III/1 on the establishment of a trust fund under the Convention, ECE/MP.WAT/15/Add.1, annex II).

7. Other business

At the time of writing, the secretariat had no points to propose under this agenda item.

8. Closing

The Chair will close the meeting on 9 March 2011 at 17.00.