



Legal frameworks for transboundary water cooperation
Side event during the Africa Water Week, 27 May 2014, 18.00, room C01
Followed by a cocktail reception

Organizers: United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes, France, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), Dundee Centre for Water Law, Policy & Science under the auspices of UNESCO, WWF, Green Cross International

Expected outcome of side event:

Increased awareness of international water law and transboundary cooperation, in particular the 1992 UNECE Water Convention (Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes) and the 1997 UN Watercourses Convention (Convention on the Law of the Non-Navigational Uses of International Watercourses), as well as basin agreements

Short description:

Africa is home to many of the world's major transboundary watercourses, which cover more than half of its surface area and more than 90% of its surface water resources. A sound legal framework helps to ensure stable and reliable cooperation on shared waters. Recognition by the international community of the importance of bilateral, regional and multilateral legal frameworks has manifested itself in the conclusion of a number of treaties on the use, development and protection of transboundary watercourses and related ecosystems. While many African basins are covered by such agreements, there still exist regulatory gaps in Africa and weaknesses in some existing agreements. The global opening of the UNECE Water Convention and the imminent entry into force of the 1997 UN Watercourses Convention as well as the articles on the Law of Transboundary Aquifers provide an important opportunity to strengthen transboundary water cooperation in Africa and worldwide. The side event will demonstrate the benefits of such legal frameworks as well as supportive mechanisms and programmes, such as the UNESCO IHP-ISARM programme which provides technical support to Member States through transboundary aquifers studies, and the rich experience and guidance material developed under the Water Convention which helps to implement both conventions for better transboundary water management.

Provisional programme:

Mr. Marco KEINER, Director, Environment Division, UNECE: The global opening of the UNECE Water Convention/ moderator

Mr. Sylvester MATEMU, Tanzania: The importance of legal frameworks at different levels in the Zambezi River Basin

Mr. Samuel OME, Federal Ministry of Water Resources, Nigeria: Nigeria and the two Conventions for transboundary Water management

Mr. Jean-François BONNET, Head of Waters, soils, pollutions unit, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Development, France: Promotion of the two international Conventions on transboundary waters

Mr. Blaise-Léandre TONDO, International Commission for the Congo-Oubangui-Sangha Basin: The legal framework of the CICOS and the link to the two Conventions for transboundary water management

Professor Cheikh Becaye Gaye, UNESCO: How UNESCO supports transboundary cooperation on groundwaters in Africa: the Internationally Shared Aquifer Resources Management (ISARM) project and the TWAP

Questions and discussion with the audience
Cocktail reception at the invitation of France