



WORKSHOP

THE UNECE CONVENTION FOR THE PROTECTION AND USE OF TRANSBOUNDARY WATERCOURSES AND INTERNATIONAL LAKES KEY ASPECTS AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR LEBANON

4-5 FEBRUARY 2015

COUNCIL OF MINISTERS, THE GRAND SERAIL, BEIRUT, LEBANON

INFORMATION NOTICE

Introduction

Water is an increasingly scarce resource in Lebanon. Transboundary cooperation for the sustainable management of the 3 transboundary watercourses (the Asi-Orontes, Nahr el Kabir al-Janoubi - the Southern Great River and the Hasbani-Wazzani Rivers) as well as transboundary aquifers shared between Lebanon and neighbouring countries becomes increasingly important.

In 1999, Lebanon ratified the United Nations Convention on Non-Navigational Uses of International Watercourses (UN Watercourses Convention, 1997), which entered into force in 2014. The 2002 Agreement between Syria and Lebanon for the sharing of the waters of the Southern Great River basin refers to the UN Watercourses Convention principles.

The United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes (Water Convention) has provided, since its entry into force in 1992, an important framework for improving the management of transboundary surface and groundwater resources in the pan-European region. The Water Convention has become a global multilateral legal framework for transboundary water cooperation in 2013, open for accession by all United Nations Member States. The Water Convention could offer a solid cooperation framework for Lebanon and its neighbouring countries.

Objectives of the workshop

The workshop aims to highlight the importance of legal instruments for the promotion of sustainable transboundary waters management. In particular, it aims to increase knowledge on the Water Convention, its work as well as the possible benefits and added value for Lebanon to accede to it.

The workshop will:

- Present current status, progress achieved and prevailing challenges for cooperation on transboundary waters in Lebanon;
- Present legal frameworks for cooperation on shared water resources available at the global, regional and basin levels;
- Detail the guiding principles and general provisions of the Water Convention, its main obligations, as well as their potential relevance to the specific situation of Lebanon;
- Present the concrete outcomes of the thematic work achieved within the framework of the Water Convention, including technical and strategic guidance documents, and the practical experiences of its application on the ground;
- Identify options at technical and policy levels for the way forward.

Expected outcomes

A report with the main conclusions of the workshop will be produced.

Main recommendations (if any) will be translated into a national road-map towards possible accession to the Water Convention.

Organization of work

Introductory speeches, several technical and legal presentations and interactive discussions will allow for an open exchange of information and for a debate on the possible benefits for Lebanon of becoming a Party to the Water Convention.

The workshop will take place from at 8.30am till 5.30pm (day 1) and 9:00 till 1pm (day 2).

Simultaneous interpretation English-Arabic will be provided.

Coffee breaks and lunch will be provided. A cocktail will be offered on 4 February after the workshop.

Target audience

Representatives of institutions and other stakeholders that are involved, directly or not (but still play a relevant role), in transboundary water management, in particular from:

- Ministry of Energy and Water
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Emigrants
- Ministry of Justice
- Ministry of Environment
- Council of Ministers
- Deans of the Faculties of Law
- Parliamentarians
- Selected NGOs
- International experts: from UNECE countries, River Basin Organizations, INBO...

Venue

Council of Ministers premises, Beirut (Grand Serail, Governmental Palace)

Practical information

Participants should confirm participation by 25 January 2015 by writing to Eng. Mona Fakhri, Director of Water at the Ministry of Energy and Water, monafakhri@hotmail.com.

Partners

The workshop is co-organized by the Ministry of Energy and Water of Lebanon, UNECE and GWP-Med, with financial support from the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC).

Website of the workshop

More information on the workshop can be downloaded from the following website:

www.unece.org/env/water/workshop_Lebanon2015_WaterConvention

It includes background documents such as the brochure *The Global Opening of the 1992 UNECE Water Convention* and the publication *Guide to Implementing the Water Convention*.

Presentations will be made available on the website at the end of the workshop.